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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE “NO  
CHILD LEFT BEHIND” LAW AND PERCEIVED LEVELS  
OF BURNOUT AMONG TEACHERS IN  
BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

by

Carmen George

Chair: Elvin Gabriel

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND” LAW AND PERCEIVED LEVELS OF BURNOUT AMONG TEACHERS IN BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Name of researcher: Carmen George

Name and degree of faculty chair: Elvin Gabriel, Ed.D.

Date completed: November 2014

### Problem

The purpose of this research study was to explore the extent to which variations in the three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) are influenced by teachers’ attitude toward the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. This study also examined the extent to which years of teaching experience and class size influence differences in reported levels of burnout.

### Method

Teacher perception of the NCLB Act and how it contributes to teacher burnout in this study was examined by utilizing two instruments. First was the MBI-ES instrument which captures a three-dimensional profile of burnout: emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Second, the No Child Left Behind survey focused on four components of the NCLB that may contribute to burnout: Teachers' perception of standardized testing, pressure felt by teachers to improve test scores, standardized test effect on instructional practices, and teachers' opinions of NCLB and its adequate yearly progress. Teachers' years of teaching experience and the class size as it relates to small, average, or large class sizes were also examined to determine how they influenced differences in reported levels of burnout. Descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis of variance, and canonical correlation were employed to analyze the data.

## Results

The results of the teachers' attitudes toward the No Child Left Behind survey indicated the following:

1. Over 50% or more of the respondents indicated a negative response to the effectiveness of standardized testing.
2. Over 50% or more of the respondents reported feeling pressure from the following entities, namely: (a) The State Department of Education; (b) The No Child Left Behind Act; (c) The U.S. Department of Education; (d) the newspaper media; and (e) The Local School District Administration. Also, 50% or more of the teachers indicated that they put pressure on themselves to improve test scores.
3. Over 50% or more of the respondents agreed that the following variables had an impact on how the state and district's standardized tests affected instructional practices: (a) teaching to the standards; (b) teaching content on the state/district test; (b) elimination of curriculum material that is not tested; (c) a lot of time spent on test-taking

skills; (d) rote drill in teaching; (e) emphasis on factual recall knowledge; (f) the use of explicit instruction; (g) clarification of learning goals; and (h) effective teaching of students who struggle academically.

4. Over 50% or more of the respondents agreed that the following variables, (a) teaching to the test; (b) elimination of non-tested curriculum; and (c) teacher burnout, were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress component..

The analysis indicated that teachers who score low in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high in personal accomplishment will feel less pressure to increase test scores and have high opinions regarding standardized tests and their effect on instructional practices as well as high opinions regarding the impact of the NCLB on adequate yearly progress.

The components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) were not affected by years of teaching experience. Depersonalization was affected by teachers who had small classes and teachers who had large class sizes.

### Conclusions

Based on the analysis, the following conclusions were deduced:

1. Teachers who have not met the criteria for the burnout syndrome have a higher opinion of the NCLB Act and its mandates.
2. Based on this research and previous studies, class size plays a role in teacher burnout.

3. Teachers who have not met the criteria for the burnout syndrome but report high levels of emotional exhaustion may be at risk for burnout.

Andrews University

School of Education

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A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Carmen George

November 2014



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background of Study**

There is a national concern that public school systems are failing our children academically and that as a nation, the U.S. is losing its competitive edge in the international market. In the publication *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner et al., 1983), American schools were described as falling into “a rising tide of mediocrity.” As a result, states and/or districts developed standards specifying the required academic content for each grade level. Because of the development of such standards, the model idea was that good standardized test scores equal good education and that standardized tests have become the predominant accountability tool used to measure student achievement of these academic standards and the effectiveness of teachers in teaching these standards (Abrams & Madaus, 2003; Burley, 2002; Erpenbach, Forte-Fast, & Potts, 2003; Lashway, 2002; Meier, 2000; Popham, 2002, 2004; Stoskopf, 2002).

The national study, *A Nation at Risk*, has been called the genesis of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability (Brady, 2003). NCLB has given the federal government a greater role than ever before in setting educational standards and mandating accountability measures (Barone, 2004; Prescott, 2001;Sizer, 2004). A focus on holding

schools accountable for student achievement on standardized assessment set NCLB apart from previous versions of the law (Guilfoyle, 2006).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 passed Congress and was signed into law on January 8, 2002, by President George W. Bush. This act was an extension of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was first passed in 1965. The goal of the ESEA was to improve the U.S. educational system by providing better education for low socioeconomic students by providing an increase of services to them. The ESEA provided federal funds for schools but did not require accountability in the use of those funds. The Center on Education Policy (2006) clarified why accountability was not part of the ESEA in 1965: “At that time, the federal role in education was marginal, most state education agencies had very limited authority and capabilities, and local people were extremely wary that more federal aid would bring federal control” (p. iv). The No Child Left Behind Act was based on stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, scientific research-based educational methods, and more choices for parents in terms of their child’s education. Its purpose was to raise the achievement of all students in the nation and eliminate the achievement gap seen among students differentiated by race, ethnicity, poverty, disability, and English proficiency (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

Through the NCLB Act, policy makers in Washington sought to raise academic achievement in the nation by requiring schools to assess all students on specified content areas and report their progress toward proficiency. The focus of the NCLB Act was on core academic subjects as defined in the law: “The term core academic subjects identified were English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics

and government, economics, art, history and geography” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b).

At the core of the No Child Left Behind Act were a number of measures designed to drive broad gains in student achievement and to hold states and schools more accountable for student progress. They represented significant changes to the education landscape (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). These measures are as follows:

*Annual Testing:* States were required to begin testing students in Grades 3-8 annually in reading and math and had to test students in science at least once in elementary, middle, and high school. Schools and districts must demonstrate (through their test scores) that they are on course to reach 100% proficiency for all groups of students by the 2013–2014 school year. The states themselves decide what is proficient and what is an adequate rate of progress for each group. Three conditions are required for making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in a given year:

1. At least 95% of students are tested for reading and mathematics, for all students and for all subgroups of 45 or more students.
2. At least meet the minimum annual target, for meeting/exceeding standards for reading and mathematics for all groups and all subgroups of 45 or more students.
3. At least meet the minimum annual target for attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or graduation rate for high schools.

*Academic Progress:* States were required to bring all students and subgroups of 45 or more students up to the proficiency level on state tests by the 2013-2014 school years. The subgroups required by NCLB are: Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Native

American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiethnic; students on free or reduced lunch, students with disabilities, students with IEPs, and Limited English Proficient students.

*Report Cards:* States were required to furnish annual report cards showing a range of information, including student achievement. To help ensure that all groups of students are progressing at an adequate rate, the test results must be disaggregated and reported according to poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency. This is intended to prevent schools from lumping test results together in an overall average for the school, effectively hiding the achievement gaps between groups of students.

*Highly Qualified Teachers:* Every teacher in core content areas working in a public school had to be highly qualified in each subject in which he or she taught.

*Reading First:* The act created a competitive grant program called Reading First to help states and districts set up scientific research-based reading programs for children in Grades K-3.

*Funding Charges:* The NCLB Act was expected to better target resources to school districts with high concentrations of poor children through the alteration in the Title 1 funding formula.

### **Statement of the Problem**

On March 29, 2013, a Fulton County grand jury indicted 35 former Atlanta educators, including the former superintendent, for their alleged roles in what prosecutor call a huge cheating conspiracy stretching to 58 schools. Investigators for the state found that these educators had compromised state testing by either providing answers to students during the test or correcting wrong answers after the tests were turned in. During the investigation, teachers reported how they were forced to cheat (Copeland, 2013).

Subsequent investigations suggest that the Atlanta case may not be isolated. An investigation in 2012, by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, found 196 school districts across the U.S. with suspicious test score gains (Perry, Vogell, Judd, & Pell, 2012). In 2011, *USA Today* looked at scores across six states and the District of Columbia and found more than 1,600 cases of improbable score gains, including several cases in which educators in District of Columbia schools erased student answers on test forms (Copeland, 2013).

A problem exists in the U.S. public schools as they strive to incorporate standards and assessments (Smylie, 1999) and meet the mandates (Schroeder, 2006) of NCLB. The NCLB act was devised for the purpose of holding schools accountable for raising the achievement of all students and closing the socioeconomic and racial achievement gap. To comply with the law's mandates, states administer approximately 68 million standardized tests annually to measure student achievement. Additionally, these test scores are utilized in judging schools and teacher effectiveness (Guilfoyle, 2006). A school faces serious sanctions should the students of the mathematics and reading teachers at reporting grade levels fail to make adequate yearly progress. These sanctions become even more severe if the school has failed for several years. These sanctions can range from a school being labeled as "needing improvement," to a school district implementing certain corrective actions to improve the school. These corrective measures may include reopening the school as a charter and/or replacing all or most of the school staff regardless of the subject area or grade level taught.

The crucial issue in education today is the reported symptoms of dissatisfaction, increased stress, and reduced morale associated with the No Child Left Behind mandates.

Valli and Buese's (2007) research that focused on the changing roles and attitudes in teachers since NCLB concluded that most teachers reported that their work lives have become much faster, with little autonomy, and that they struggle with curriculum pacing/alignment, and data-driven tasks that are mandated by building principals. Considering teachers' expanding roles and requirements, along with working long hours, teachers may also be feeling additional stress in struggling to balance their work demands and time constraints.

A study was done in two urban districts servicing low-income, minority students. Of the 1,445 teachers working in adequate progress or improvement schools (Sunderman, Tracey, & Orfield, 2004), almost 50% reported that No Child Left Behind sanctions were unfair to schools needing improvement. Moreover, 40.9% of improvement-school teachers, versus 34.9% of adequate-progress school teachers, reported the legislation had reduced morale. Research findings on burnout have consistently indicated that dissatisfaction, pressures, and reduced morale from work demands compromise job effectiveness (Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2002; Linden, Keijsers, Eling, & Schaijk, 2005; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

James (2007) explored the perceptions of elementary teachers in the state of Wyoming concerning the influences of NCLB mandates and high-stakes testing on their curriculum and instructional practices. A major finding was that the sanctions attached to low test scores had the effect of compromising the quality of teaching and weakening learning experiences. These negative effects included increased time spent in test preparation while eliminating valuable untested curriculum.

Teachers' symptoms may be, in actuality, the prolonged stress symptoms of teacher burnout (Byrne, 1993). Hughes (2001) has argued: "Negative shifts cannot be ignored because they have the potential to affect the teacher and the educational system" (p. 289). Moreover, "even small numbers of seriously disaffected [burned-out] teachers may adversely influence the functioning of a school" (Farber, 1991, p. 201). From the body of research, it appears that the mandates of the NCLB are placing additional stress on teachers as well as reducing teacher morale. The expanding roles of teachers and the demands to increase test scores and meet AYP goals can be potential threats, which leads to stress. Teachers who experience stress over a long period of time may eventually experience burnout.

### **Rationale of the Study**

There are many articles and/or research initiatives which have focused on studies regarding the curriculum and instructional influences of NCLB and high-stakes testing (Bond, 2004; Center on Education Policy, 2006; Corbett & Wilson, 1991; Kozol, 2005; Smith, 1991; Smith & Rottenburg, 1991). I did not find any research study that reported the perceptions and insights of Michigan elementary and secondary teachers pertaining to the curriculum and instructional influences of the NCLB and high-stakes testing and how it may affect the levels of burnout in teachers.

Phelps (2003) contended that published research studies and articles on standardized testing and the NCLB accountability plan are largely one-sided with an anti-testing bent. In order to provide the broadest picture of NCLB, it is important to ascertain, as part of that picture, the ways in which NCLB's mandated high-stakes standardized tests, AYP goals, and sanctions for low test scores have influenced classroom curriculum

and instruction and present both the positive and negative influences as perceived by teachers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Teachers expressed significant worries about elements of the law's implementation: 71% said that students in their schools take too many standardized tests, 70% indicated that NCLB is "causing problems" in their local schools, and only 15% believed that NCLB is "improving local public education" (Azzam, Perkins-Gough, & Theirs, 2006).

While attempting to meet the needs of all students as prescribed by NCLB, teachers can suffer from prolonged levels of high stress, which can lead to burnout. The Center on Education Policy is an independent nonprofit organization that studies federal, state, and local implementation of NCLB and reports annually. Based on surveys, case studies, and national forums, the Center on Education Policy (2006) determined that pressure to improve test scores caused some teacher stress, and that school labels, such as improvement school for failure to make adequate yearly progress, sometimes had a negative effect on morale. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the "No Child Left Behind" Law and perceived levels of burnout among teachers in Berrien County, Michigan.

### **Research Questions**

This study examined the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' attitudes toward No Child Left Behind as they relate to
  - a. adequate yearly progress
  - b. pressure to improve test scores



- c. standardized testing
  - d. the effects of standardized testing on instructional practices?
2. What are the perceived levels of burnout among teachers?
- a. To what extent are measures of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) related to attitudes toward NCLB with respect to:
    - b. adequate yearly progress
    - c. pressure to improve test scores
    - d. standardized testing
    - e. the effects of standardized testing on instructional practices?
  - f. To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to years of teaching experience?
3. To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to class size?

### **Significance of the Study**

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) contended that the ultimate purpose of all research is the improvement of the world or social betterment. It stands to reason, therefore, that the ultimate purpose of educational research is the improvement of school-related teaching and learning (American Educational Research Association, 1999; Cresswell, Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003).

This study is no exception. It is designed to provide information to school districts in Michigan on how teachers' attitudes toward the NCLB accountability plan may be contributing to levels of burnout. This research will be helpful in determining patterns regarding the perceptions of elementary and secondary teachers concerning the positive,

neutral, and negative influence of the NCLB accountability plan and the factors that contribute to their level of burnout. From this study, educators will become aware of how NCLB mandates in the workplace may alter the performance of teachers in the classroom and contribute to prolonged stress and associated levels of burnout.

I anticipate that the information from this study will provide school administrators and school counselors with new insights into the extent to which the NCLB Act may be impacting the stress level of their staff and encourage them to provide the support when possible to establish a less stressful work environment to enhance student achievement. These new insights should assist policy makers in making decisions that will reduce teacher burnout and ultimately increase student performance. It is hoped that the results from this study would add additional information to the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between NCLB and the associated levels of burnout.

### **The Conceptual Framework**

Constructing a conceptual framework is a way to develop some clarity about the interrelationships involved in a study. This study examines the relationship between teachers' attitude towards the "No Child Left Behind" law and perceived levels of burnout among teachers.

For the purpose of this study, teacher attitude is defined as teachers' beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendency toward socially significant objects, groups, events, or symbols. This study examines teachers' attitudes toward the No Child Left Behind law. Based on data from literature review and teacher surveys, Abrams, Pedulla, and Madus (2003) confirmed that tests are having a profound impact on teachers' attitudes. Teachers feel that pressure to raise test scores encourages them to emphasize instructional and

assessment strategies mirroring the content and format of the state test, and to devote large amounts of classroom time to test preparation.

A survey for teachers on components of the No Child Left Behind Act was developed by James (2007) to assess teachers' perception on the following: Standardized testing in their school/district, the extent of pressure to increase test scores, standardized tests' effect on instructional practices and the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress. This study concentrated on the possibility that the mandates associated with NCLB could lead to increased burnout among public elementary and secondary teachers. This survey was employed to assess teachers' attitude toward the NCLB Act.

Burnout is the state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress (Henry, 2013). When a potentially threatening event is encountered, a reflexive, cognitive balancing act ensues, weighing the perceived demands of the event against one's perceived ability to deal with them. Events perceived as potential threats trigger the stress response, a series of physiological and psychological changes that occur when coping capacities are seriously challenged. The most typical trigger to the stress response is the perception that one's coping resources are inadequate for handling life's demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

According to current models of stress, we are constantly taking the measure of the daily demands we experience in life and comparing this to the resources we possess for dealing with them. If our resources appear equal to the demands, we view them as mere challenges. If, however, demands are viewed as exceeding our resources, they become stressors and trigger the stress response. Accordingly, teacher stress may be seen as the perception of an imbalance between demands at school and the resources teachers have

for coping with them (Esteve, 2000; Troman & Woods, 2001). Symptoms of stress in teachers can include anxiety and frustration, impaired performance, and ruptured interpersonal relationships at work and home (Kyriacou, 2001). Researchers (Farber, 1998; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Troman & Woods, 2001) note that teachers who experience stress over long periods of time may experience what is known as burnout.

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet the constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest or motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give. The negative effects of burnout spill over into every area of life—including your home and social life. Burnout can also cause long-term changes in your body that make you vulnerable to such illnesses as colds and flu. Because of its many consequences, it's important to deal with burnout right away (Smith, Segal, & Segal, 2013).

The multidimensional model of burnout was implemented to guide this study. This model of burnout consists of three dimensions of burnout: exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal accomplishment. Exhaustion is a result of either physical or emotional demands, depersonalization involves negative attitudes, and decreased personal accomplishment includes reduced productivity, low morale, withdrawal, or inability to cope. Based on these three dimensions, Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996) developed the MBI-ES to measure burnout.

The survey developed by James (2007) was used by the Teacher Network to assess 661 New York teachers' attitudes toward the NCLB Act. The results indicated that the majority of the teachers (95%) felt that the NCLB with its Adequate Yearly Progress goals encouraged teachers to "teach to the test" and eliminate curriculum material that was not tested. Teachers also reported feeling pressured mostly from principals, administrators, school boards, and the news media to raise student test scores. The results from this survey indicated that teachers felt that the NCLB Act, with its Adequate Yearly Progress goals, contributed to "teacher burnout."

A study done by Hanson (2006) indicated that teachers experience burnout as a result of high-stakes testing. The Center on Education Policy (2006) determined that teacher stress is associated with pressure to increase test scores, and the Board of Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Bond, 2004) concluded that high-stakes testing forces teachers to teach to the test.

In a study done by James (2007), it was reported that a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching had largely replaced differentiated instruction in the classroom. In this study, it was reported that much of the joy and creativity of teaching and learning had been displaced by stress, worry, and disillusionment because teachers taught the test rather than the students.

Adequate Yearly Progress is measured by state standardized achievement tests in reading or language arts, mathematics, and science. Porter, Linn, and Trimble (2005) noted that identifying schools that have failed to meet AYP, so that corrective measures can be taken, has placed additional pressure and accountability on teachers and schools.

Figure 1 is a representation that attempts to capture the essential interrelationships investigated in this study.

While years of teaching experience would seem to be an important variable in terms of teacher burnout, the research is sparse and inconsistent (Byrne, 1999). Based on

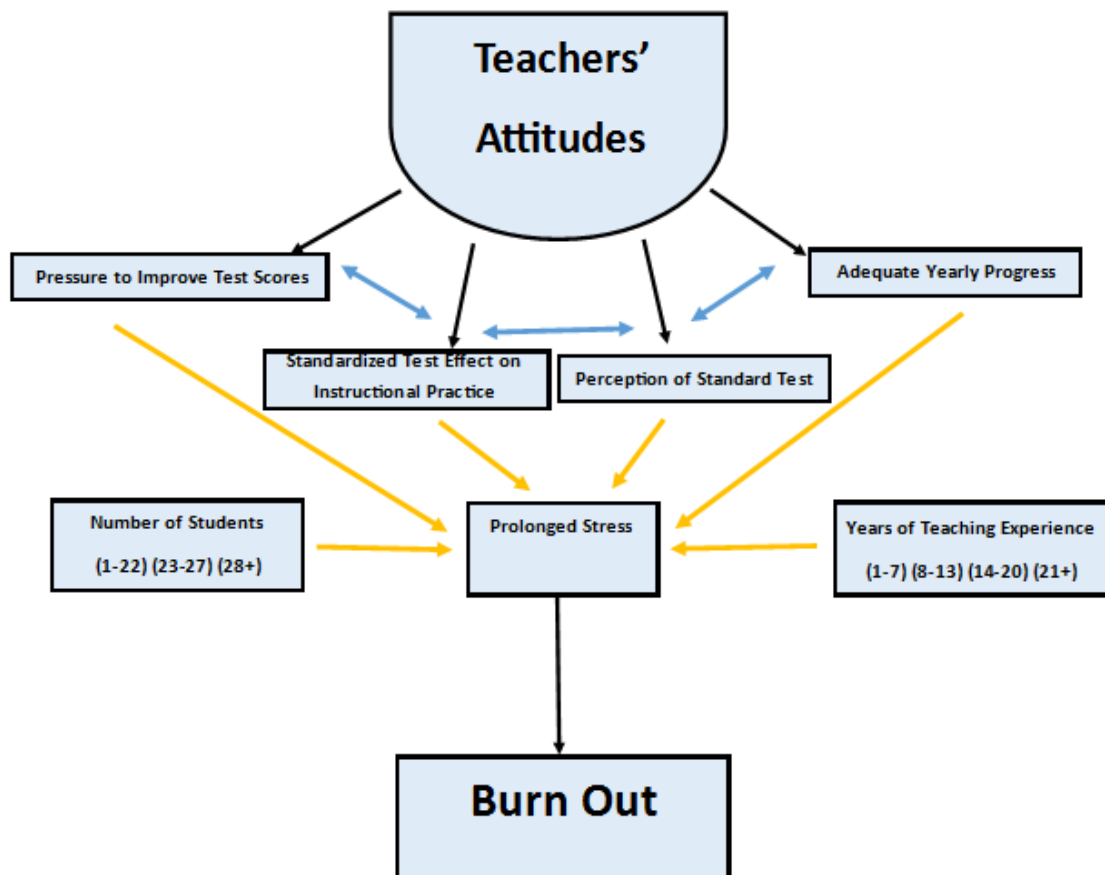


Figure 1. A diagrammatic representation of this study.

research done by Borthwick, Thornell, and Wilkinson (1982), teachers with fewer years of experience exhibited higher levels of burnout. In contrast, Borg and Falzon (1989) concluded from their study that teachers with 20+ years exhibited higher levels of stress. In a more recent study, Malik, Mueller, and Meinke (1991) found years of teaching experience not to be an important variable in terms of teacher burnout.

Class size has emerged as one of the most frequently mentioned environmental stressors in studies using self-report methods (Sandholtz, 1990). The Health and Education Research Operative Services (2003) indicated that learning increases as class size decreases. French (1993) surveyed 223 Colorado elementary teachers on teachers' perception of class size. The results indicated that teachers with larger class size reported greater stress than did teachers with lower pupil-teacher ratios.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Accountability*—States are required to establish a definition of student proficiency in the core academic subjects of reading/language arts, mathematics, and science through prescribed indicators and set a timetable to bring all students in all subgroups up to the defined levels of proficiency by 2013–2014. The school must report to parents their child's progress in each targeted academic subject annually, and the state is required to report the results of students' performance on the annual tests for every public school to parents and the community (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

*Adequate Yearly Progress*—An individual state's measure of progress toward the goal of 100% of students achieving state academic standards in at least reading/language arts and math. It sets the minimum level of proficiency that the state, its school district, and schools must achieve each year on annual tests and related academic indicators. Schools that have not met AYP after 4 years are subject to restructuring or reconstitution (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

*Teacher Attitude*—Attitude as defined by Hogg and Vaughan (2005) is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendency toward socially significant objects, groups, events, or symbols. For the purpose of this research,

teacher attitude is defined as teacher beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendency toward socially significant objects, groups, events, or symbols.

*Burnout*—A state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when one feels overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands (Smith et al., 2013).

*Class Size*—The average number of students per class, calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled by the number of classes (“Class Size,” 2003). The U.S. Department of Education estimates the current average class size is closer to 25 students (Sparks, 2010). For the purpose of this study, class size will be defined in three categories:

1. Small class size—fewer than 22 students
2. Average class size—23–27 students
3. Large class size—over 27 students.

*Depersonalization*—The dimension of burnout that manifests as negative cynical attitudes and feelings about students (Maslach et al., 1996).

*Emotional Exhaustion*—The dimension of burnout associated with feeling emotionally overextended and exhausted by one’s work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

*Highly Qualified Teacher*—Teachers with primary responsibility for instructing students in the core academic subject areas are required to be “highly qualified.” A teacher’s qualifications do not make him or her highly qualified with respect to his or her areas of assignment. Highly qualified is defined as having full state certification, holding a bachelor’s degree or better in the subject taught, and having demonstrated subject-matter competency as determined by the state under NCLB guidelines. States were



required to develop a plan by the end of 2005–2006 to ensure that every teacher is highly qualified to teach in his or her core content area (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

*Instructional Practice*—The NCLB Act puts emphasis on determining which educational programs and practices have been proven effective through rigorous scientific research (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

*Personal Accomplishment*—The dimension of burnout associated with feelings of achievement, contribution to student success, competence, and efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

*Standardized Test*—States must develop and administer annual tests that define the proficiency that all students are expected to reach in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. States also must include a sample of students in fourth and eighth grade in a biennial National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics and reading to verify state assessments (No Child Left Behind, 2001).

### **Limitations of Study**

The size of the sample, the sampling procedures, and how the researcher controls for intervening variables are important criteria to the validity and reliability of any study. Because time and financial constraints factored into how this study was conducted, it is necessary to examine some of the limitations of this research study.

This study was conducted in a small region in southwestern Michigan. A non-random approach was implemented, and because of the restricted nature of the population and the small sample size, caution should be used when generalizing these findings to the wider population.

### **Delimitations of Study**

This study is delimited to teachers of third- through 12th-grade students in general education programs in schools in the southwestern region of Michigan.

### **Organization of Study**

Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature which focuses on the four components of the NCLB Act and how they contribute to teacher burnout.

Chapter 3 deals with the procedures and methodology used in the study. It discusses the sources and methods of data collecting, the development and design of the instruments, and the statistical treatment of the data.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis and evaluation of the data based on the subjects' responses to the items on the instrument. This section evaluates the findings in terms of the hypotheses posed.

Chapter 5 presents the summary of the study, together with the conclusions reached from the analysis and evaluation of the data. Implications and recommendations for practice and future research are included.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

This chapter highlights historical, theoretical, and research paradigms and models which focus on the relationship between teacher attitudes toward the NCLB legislation and their perceived levels of burnout. The first phase of the review gives a historical overview of the educational issues which led to the implementation of the NCLB Act of 2001, and then provides research and theoretical perspectives on teachers' attitudes towards specific mandates of the Act, including (a) high-stakes testing/standardized testing, (b) instructional practices, (c) adequate yearly progress, and (d) increasing test scores. The second phase of this review highlights teachers' perceived levels of burnout as a result of their attempts to conform to the tenets of the NCLB Act. This phase begins with an overview of the syndromes and symptoms of burnout, and their effects on individuals, including teachers, and ends with an exploration of the relationship between specific mandates of the NCLB Act, as specified in the first phase of the review, and teachers' perceived levels of burnout. The third phase addresses the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of the NCLB Act and their perceived levels of stress/burnout. This phase also includes teachers' perceived levels of stress/burnout as it relates to years of teaching and class size.

## Historical Antecedents of the NCLB Act

In August of 1981, the National Commission on Excellence in Education was commissioned to review and synthesize the data and scholarly literature on the quality of learning and teaching in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities, both public and private, with special concern for the educational experience of teenage youth (Gardner et al., 1983). Their report, *A Nation at Risk*, was issued in April of 1983 and stated:

Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself. (p. 8)

The recommendations set forth in *A Nation at Risk* promised lasting reform by demanding that all students give their best effort and performance, whether they are gifted or less able, affluent or disadvantaged, whether destined for college, the farm, or industry (Gardner et al., 1983). *A Nation at Risk* was the beginning of an evolution of achievement testing and standard-based education reform.

The NCLB Act of 2001 brought clarity to the value, use, and importance of achievement testing of students in kindergarten through high school. The NCLB Act was instituted in response to the at-risk indicators identified in the U.S. Department of Education report to the nation (Gardner et al., 1983). It represented a reauthorization of the ESEA in dramatic ways to address the low performance of students in the areas of math, reading, science, comprehension, and written expression. The NCLB Act instituted a series of "mandates" designed to address the following at-risk indicators:

1. Functional illiteracy among minority youth that may run as high as 40%
2. Scores that consistently declined in verbal mathematics, physics, and English

subjects as measured by the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

3. Nearly 40% of 17-year-olds unable to draw inferences from written materials; only one-fifth able to write a persuasive essay; and only one-third able to solve a mathematics problem requiring several steps

4. Remedial mathematics courses in public 4-year colleges increased by 72% and now constitute one-quarter of all mathematics courses taught in those institutions.

The NCLB Accountability Plan includes state-standardized tests that vary in content, difficulty, and retake policy. Despite this, the sanctions attached to test performance as mandated by NCLB are similar from state to state (Abrams & Madaus, 2003; Erpenbach et al., 2003). States were required to have grade-level standards in reading or language arts and math beginning in the 2005-2006 school year. They were also required to administer reading or language arts, and mathematics standardized tests to all students in Grades 3-8, and once in Grades 10-12. In 2006-2007, state science standards were developed, and recently, in 2007-2008, they were tested (Abrams & Madaus, 2003; Erpenbach et al., 2003; Popham, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

One way that teachers are feeling the effects of NCLB is through the new teacher accountability standards implemented at the state level. These demands, which include more stringent requirements for teacher licensing, can be stressors for current teachers, as well as new teacher candidates. Some teachers who were well beyond their probationary period and considered veterans by their districts found themselves suddenly required to return to school for further certification, testing, or the completion of alternative

requirements as determined by their state's Department of Education to become compliant with the NCLB requirements.

NCLB requires that 100% of students must reach the proficient level by 2014. This means that all students, regardless of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, or special education status, will be required to score in the proficient or advanced range on the state's standardized test in reading, math, and science so that there is no achievement gap. Students must demonstrate solid academic performance in the tested subject matter to rate as proficient (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The school must report to parents their child's progress in each targeted academic subject annually, and the state is required to report the results of students' performance on the annual tests for every public school to parents and the community. Reporting systems require that each district report the measured progress of its schools by using the achievement scores of students in specific grade levels. Schools are labeled as making adequate yearly progress or as being in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

The creators of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 acknowledged the cause-and-effect relationship between teacher performance and student achievement when they attached painstaking school accountability measures with requirements that aimed to ensure all children were taught by highly qualified teachers (Berry & Hirsch, 2005). Yet, the very Act that aimed to ensure that all children have the best of teachers created such immeasurable amounts of pressure on teachers that it contradicted the very thing it purported to do (Hanson, 2006). Existing research shows that good quality teachers

develop over time because they develop expertise through experience (Burden, 1980; Fuller, 1969). However, the national teacher attrition rate is a growing concern in the United States. Numerous schools, especially in areas serving high-poverty populations, are having an increasingly difficult time, year after year, recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Over 150,000 public school teachers are hired each year either to replace those teachers who have left the profession entirely or to fill new positions in growing districts (Flowers, 2003). Thus, NCLB, the very Act that aims to ensure that our children are taught by the most proficient of teachers, is in fact resulting in children being taught by novice teachers, year after year (Hanson, 2006).

The current administration, under President Barack Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden, supports the NCLB Act's overall goal, but believes the NCLB Act needs to be tweaked to achieve a new goal that, by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college completion (U.S Department of Education, 2010).

The Blueprint for Reform will address the issue of standardized testing by implementing college- and career-ready standards and developing improved assessments aligned with those standards. New assessment systems will better capture high-order thinking skills, provide more accurate measures of student growth, and better inform classroom instruction to respond to academic needs. For America's lowest-performing schools, intensive support and effective interventions will be implemented to improve student learning and achievement (U.S Department of Education, 2010).

The mandates from the NCLB Act have created a crisis in the educational arena. That which was intended to ensure quality education for every child brings new stress to the world of education. The teachers who are burned out while trying to reach every

student and meet the mandates of NCLB could be the teachers who are working the hardest. Freudenberger (1977) stated, “One of the first signs of burn-out in a member of an organization is that he or she works harder and harder, longer and longer, yet in reality appears to be accomplishing less and less” (p. 26).

### **Teachers’ Attitudes Toward the Implementation of the NCLB Act**

The NCLB Act has engendered controversy that is centered in part on the increased role of the federal government in educational policy. The majority of Americans believe that decisions about what is taught in public schools should be made at the local level by the school board (61%), rather than at the state level (22%) or at the federal level (15%) (Rose & Gallup, 2003). Results of a 2004 survey indicate that they also disagree with “the majority of strategies that NCLB uses to determine whether a school is or is not in need of improvement” (Rose & Gallup, 2004, p. 42). For example, 83% of those surveyed believe that testing only in English and mathematics will not yield a fair picture of a school, 73% say it is not possible to judge a student’s proficiency in English and mathematics on the basis of a single test, and 81% are concerned that basing decisions about school on students’ performance in English and mathematics will mean less emphasis on art, music, history, and other subjects.

A study was done by the Teachers’ Network (New York State United Teachers, 2007) to address 661 New York teachers’ attitudes toward No Child Left Behind as they relate to adequate yearly progress, pressure to improve test scores, standardized testing, and the effect standardized testing has on instructional practices. The findings in this study indicated the following:

1. Ninety-five percent said the NCLB Act, with its Adequate Yearly Progress



goals, encourages teachers to "teach to the test." Eighty-two percent of teachers reported that they spend much of their time teaching students what they know will be on the test. Ninety percent of teachers stated that the NCLB Act, with its Adequate Yearly Progress goals, contributed to "teacher burnout."

2. Seventy-nine percent stated that the emphasis on testing encouraged them to eliminate curriculum material that is not tested. Eighty percent stated that they spent a lot of time teaching test-taking skills.

3. Sixty-nine percent believed standardized testing is "necessary," a nod to the importance of measuring student progress and ensuring the equal opportunities for students promised by NCLB. However, just 34% believed the law, as currently constructed, is "beneficial" to students and schools.

4. Seven percent believed NCLB's Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for schools are helpful in closing the achievement gap.

5. Nearly 90% of New York teachers reported feeling pressured mostly from principals, administrators, school boards, and the news media to raise student test scores (New York State United Teachers, 2005).

In the educational community, there is support for high standards and high expectations for every child, but the NCLB focus on standardized testing is resulting in a narrowing of the curriculum and a "sorting of students" (Marshak, 2003, p. 229) and could halt the development of truly significant improvements in teaching and learning (Lewis, 2002). The National Education Association supports the NCLB Act in its goals but views it as an obstacle to improving public education because of its focus on "punishments rather than assistance," and "mandates rather than support for effective

programs” (Gardner et al., 1983).

Teachers expressed significant worries about elements of the law’s implementation: Seventy-one percent said that students in their schools take too many standardized tests, 70% indicated that NCLB is “causing problems” in their local schools, and only 15% believed that NCLB is “improving local public education.” All stakeholders surveyed maintained that other education issues—specifically lack of funding, student behavior/classroom management, and class size—should be more urgent priorities than raising academic standards (Azzam et al., 2006).

The NCLB highlighted the achievement gap and created a national conversation about student achievement. But it also created incentives for states to lower their standards; emphasized punishing failure and rewarding success; focused on absolute scores, rather than recognizing growth and progress; and prescribed a pass-fail, one-size-fits-all series of interventions for schools that miss their goals. Under the President Barack Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden administration, a proposal has been developed to overhaul the No Child Left Behind Act. This proposal addresses these challenges while continuing to shine a bright light on closing the achievement gap (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

### **Teachers’ Attitudes Toward the NCLB High-Stakes Testing Component**

Teachers are generally comfortable with state-designed achievement levels insofar that they are used for teachers, schools, and districts to make informed choices in such areas as resource allocation and the designing and implementation of curriculum. It is when achievement levels are used to sanction states, districts, and schools through annual statewide assessments that teachers draw objection, especially when teachers

question the validity of the assessment (Hamilton et al., 2007; Taylor, Shepherd, Kinner, & Rosenthal, 2003).

Teachers express shame, embarrassment, guilt, and anger when their students' test scores are publicized (Smith, 1991). A part of teachers' frustration has been that they do not feel that the tests adequately portray the difficulty of students' learning and are being analyzed and used in a way that are invalid, thus, unreliable (Hoffman, Assaf, & Paris, 2001). According to the NCLB, annual statewide assessments are supposed to be in line with the state standards. Teachers prefer standards that emphasize higher level skills and that are appropriate for the children they teach (Hamilton et al., 2007).

Teachers' attitude toward the validity of their annual statewide assessments varies from state to state. Sunderman et al. (2004) found that between 70% and 80% of teachers reported that their curriculum was aligned with established academic measures such as standardized assessments. In contrast, Hamilton et al. (2007) found fewer than 50% of the teachers in three states agreeing that their states' reading-language arts, math, and science assessments were a good measure of students' mastery of those subjects. Teachers in this study felt that their states' assessments were misaligned with their state standards and curriculum.

### **Teachers' Attitudes Toward the NCLB Instructional Practices Component**

The effects that high-stakes testing has on teaching practices have been mixed. The results of a survey of education officials in 50 states and 299 representative districts provided some insights into the magnitude of the effects of testing. Responding to questions about the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act, a large majority of districts (71%) reported that NCLB's testing requirements have led them to increase curricular

time spent on reading and math for students at risk of failing, and decrease time for other subjects. However, some districts view this extra time for reading and math as necessary to help low-achieving students catch up. Others pointed to negative effects, such as short-changing students from learning important subjects, squelching creativity in teaching and learning, or diminishing activities that might keep children interested in school (Center on Education Policy, 2006).

The present high-stakes testing atmosphere in education has distorted teachers' instructional practices. A study concerning teachers' attitudes toward the NCLB revealed that teachers expressed concern and frustration at the narrowing of curriculum content that occurs with increased focus on test scores. For example, three-quarters of teachers agree that AYP requirements have caused some teachers to de-emphasize and neglect untested topics. Over half agreed that NCLB sanctions have caused teachers to ignore important aspects of the curriculum (Hamilton et al., 2007).

A study which examined the teaching practices of a nationally representative sample of teachers found that the intensity of classroom, instructional, and teacher change was greatest in high-stakes test states. Study results showed that the severity of consequences attached to state tests affected the instruction students received; as the stakes increased, the influence of the test increased. Perhaps, the most disturbing findings reported by this research team was that the majority of teachers at each grade level found that state testing programs caused them to teach in a manner which did not accord with their own views of what constitutes good educational practice, and roughly three-quarters of teachers, regardless of stakes of grade levels, found that the benefits of testing were not worth the cost and time involved (Pedulla et al., 2003).

### **Teachers' Attitudes Toward Pressure to Increase Test Scores**

Hamilton (2003) indicated that the concept of measurement-driven instruction evolved from the minimum competency testing movement. The prevailing thought was that testing could influence what was taught. With the release of *A Nation at Risk*, there was a heightened concern over student and school performance. This led to increased testing and school-level incentives. The 1990s standards movement increased the awareness of the links between standards, curriculum, and testing. The links and formal stakes enhanced motivation to increase performance. High stakes testing encouraged students and educators to approach the teaching and learning process seriously.

Pedulla et al. (2003) conducted a national survey on teachers on the perceived effects of state-mandated testing on teaching and learning. The results of the study indicated similar findings to that of Abrams et al. (2003). Teachers in high-stakes situations reported feeling more pressure to have their students do well on the test and to align their instruction with the test and to engage in more test preparation.

The NCLB-mandated testing and the accompanying pressure for teachers to increase standardized test scores is contributing to increased teacher attrition. A survey conducted in Texas found that 85% of teachers agreed that some of the best teachers are leaving the profession because of the restraints the test places on decision making and the pressures placed on them and their students (Hoffman et al., 2001).

### **Teachers' Attitudes Toward the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress Component**

Teachers have a number of concerns with AYP goals as the mechanism for sanctioning schools. Schools not reaching AYP goals are labeled “needs improvement” and face a variety of sanctions. As a result of these sanctions, Sunderman et al. (2004)

found that teachers prefer not to teach at schools carrying the “needs improvement” label. The result of AYP sanction is that good teachers are leaving schools deemed “needs improvement,” thereby making the hope of reaching AYP goals even further out of reach for these schools (Ryan, 2004).

The majority of teachers oppose the use of AYP goals and sanctions as the mechanism for the improvement of schools. *Reading Today* (“Mixed Reactions,” 2005) found nine out of 10 teachers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the idea that having the state or the federal government take over a low-performing school would improve achievement. In another study, fewer than 20% felt that identifying schools that had not made AYP would lead to school improvement, while 30% of those surveyed were unsure whether identifying schools that have not made AYP would lead to school improvement (Hamilton et al., 2007).

Teachers and administrators express frustration at the unfairness of requiring all schools in a state to meet the same AYP goals, regardless of the population they teach. In Hamilton et al. (2007), a principal stated it this way:

The thing with AYP that is so frustrating is that everyone has to hit an arbitrary mark no matter what you are dealing with. Schools that have high special education populations, high ESL populations, are looked at the same as schools that have one ESL kid and one special education kid, and that’s not right. (p. 53)

### **The Impact of the NCLB Law on Teachers’ Perceived Levels of Stress/Burnout**

While the constructs of burnout and stress may appear similar and are related, it is important to distinguish between burnout as a reaction or response to experiencing constant and/or repeated exposure to stressors in one’s environment, and general stress responses, such as strain, to an acute or brief exposure to one or more stressors (Boles,

Dean, Ricks, Short, & Wang, 2000; Kokkinos, 2006; Pines & Keinan, 2005). Teacher burnout is a result of prolonged stress. Thus greater levels of stress (and burnout) can lead to exhaustion, physical complaints, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and inadequate delivery of services (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

Freudenberger (1975), a mental health coordinator, was one of the first to write about burnout and identified one sign of burnout as a feeling of exhaustion and fatigue. He described burnout of a dedicated and committed worker as resulting from taking on “too much, for too long, and too intensely” (p. 74). That person feels pressure from himself, from the needs of the population being served, and from others such as an administrator in a “three-way squeeze and will come down with a three-level burn-out” (p. 74).

The most common definition for burnout is a three-component, psychological syndrome which includes a state of (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) feelings of low personal accomplishment that occurs in response to chronic role stress (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986; Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

*Emotional Exhaustion*—Exhaustion is often caused by emotional demands which can lead to a loss of interest or spirit. When people feel cynical, they assume a cold, distant, and a depersonalized attitude toward their work and the people they encounter through work. They tend to minimize their involvement at work, and even relinquish their ideas. Feelings of ineffectiveness are accompanied by a growing sense of inadequacy. They lose confidence in their ability to make a difference professionally (Friedman, 2000). Teachers suffering from burnout’s emotional exhaustion are unable to “give of themselves to students as they once could” (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 28).

*Depersonalization*—Depersonalization includes negative, inappropriate attitudes toward students and the work environment. While some level of depersonalization is necessary and effective for performing tasks in some occupations, excessive depersonalization is associated with feelings of callousness and cynicism (Jackson et al., 1986). Teachers may be at greater risk for depersonalization because their daily work life often includes large doses of isolation from their professional peers. While teachers do interact with others on a regular basis throughout the workday, the majority of such interactions are with students, and not with other teachers or professional staff members who might better understand the demands teachers face. Factors such as teachers working alone in their classrooms and scheduling constraints that make finding time to meet with peers virtually impossible can cause teachers to feel disconnected. This depersonalization may act as a protective mechanism, and these “worn-out” teachers who now have cynical views towards students and teaching have allowed themselves to continue to remain in the field, even in a diminished capacity. While depersonalization may act as some protection for teachers, it also may encourage isolation, strengthening the risk for higher stress levels and teacher burnout (“Understanding and Preventing Burnout,” 2004).

*Reduced Personal Accomplishment*—Reduced personal accomplishment is the burnout symptom concerning workers who evaluate themselves negatively (Maslach et al., 1996). For teachers, it is the feeling of no longer being effective in working with students and in fulfilling other school-related responsibilities which may lead to low morale. The combined cognitive-emotional scenario may begin with a sense of personal unfulfillment and overload. Stressful events, combined with high, unfulfilled expectations for self-fulfillment, produce such primary stress-inducing experiences as a lack of



personal accomplishment and sense of overload. A lack of personal accomplishment combined with a feeling of overload gives rise to secondary stress-induced experiences such as a deep sense of insignificance (Friedman, 2000).

Teacher workload is growing (Naylor, 2001); stress and burnout are prevalent (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). The time required to do all that is expected of teachers is increasing (Naylor & Malcomson, 2001; Roettger, 2004), and professional development opportunities are not always effective (Guskey, 2003). Elementary school teachers working in the urban setting may face greater levels of stress and reduced morale related to No Child Left Behind testing and proficiency mandates since the achievement gap is most prevalent in urban settings according to the NCES (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Teachers working in the urban setting are the very teachers who must work at optimal levels of performance if they are to help minority and impoverished students achieve proficiency in mathematics and reading within No Child Left Behind's prescribed timeline.

Understanding the burnout symptoms as manifested by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1996) may provide insight to the readers as to why teachers implementing No Child Left Behind mandates may be suffering from the burnout malady.

### **The Relationship Between Teacher Stress/Burnout and High-Stakes Testing**

Accountability for schools and student performance through NCLB is measured through high-stakes testing. The NCLB requires schools to include 95% of students in each subgroup in standardized assessments (U.S. Department of Education [DOE],

2002b). Most studies illustrate that NCLB and the required high-stakes testing has led to an increase in stress for teachers and students. While the tests are used to measure levels of student achievement, they are also viewed by some as a measure of teacher performance and ability. Hanson (2006) conducted a study that examined a NCLB high-stakes testing work environment in relation to the psychological syndrome of burnout as manifested by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. She determined that teachers experienced extreme burnout as a result of the increased accountability through high-stakes testing required by NCLB. Hanson also concluded that because burnout can impede job performance, the achievement gap between subgroups of students might widen rather than close contrary to NCLB expectations.

Findings in a recent report released by Center on Education Policy (2006) suggest that scores on state tests are rising, but teachers are stressed as they are pushed to prove their high-quality status and feel they must teach to the test. In addition, about 71% of districts report that they must reduce instructional time in other subjects to spend more time on reading and math because these subjects are tested under NCLB. NCLB and the accompanying high-stakes tests could make reasonable stress levels hard to maintain (Boardman & Woodruff, 2004; Mabry & Margolis, 2006).

### **The Relationship Between Teacher Stress/Burnout and Instructional Practices**

Many studies have documented that teachers feel pressured to raise test scores (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Pedulla et al., 2003) and often revert to more traditional practices, such as direct instruction, to help prepare the students for the test (Abrams &

Madaus, 2003). It is not surprising therefore that when students perform poorly on assessments, teachers feel the need to alter their instruction, perhaps contributing to more negative attitudes concerning the impact of the tests (Kim & Sunderman, 2005; Urdan & Paris, 1994).

Kozol (2005) found in his observation in urban schools, serving mainly low socioeconomic status and minority populations, that teachers who were committed to doing the best they could for their students felt that they could not afford to stray from their lesson plan to listen to extraneous student responses. A sixth-grade teacher with 13 years of teaching experience was a case in point. When interviewed he stated, “My main job is to inspire lifelong learning, help [the student] see the value of education, be self-teaching, [develop] a love of reading, relevant math, manners, civility” (Williams, 2002, p. 75). When observed while teaching math, the teacher discouraged students from using number lines with fractions because, he explained, number lines were not used in the standardized test. This teacher skipped tasks that used manipulatives to show fraction and decimal equivalents and converted hands-on tasks to a memorized algorithm giving particular attention to standardized procedures. When asked why, he explained that there was not time for the hands-on exploration of concepts when preparing students for the standardized tests (Williams, 2002).

Williams (2002) also interviewed elementary teachers from the highest performing school in a central California district—a gifted and talented magnet school with only 2% limited English proficiency (LEP) students, 39% on free or reduced-price lunch, and an approximately half Caucasian and half minority population. A third-grade teacher with 15 years of teaching experience described her theoretical teaching

philosophy as, “The whole concept of hands-on experiential, creating a curriculum that was more driven by what their [the students’] assessed needs are rather than because it’s in the book” (p. 106). When observed, Williams noted the consistency between the teacher’s stated philosophy and his/her actual teaching practice. Excerpts from his notes included, “Teacher recreates student work at chalkboard. . . . Teacher does not use adopted text; lesson is modified from alternative curriculum materials” (Williams, 2002, p. 106).

The abovementioned studies suggests that when teachers are pressured to increase test score, they will resort to practices which may trigger negative attitudes towards standardized testing. It may be inferred that if such practices are prolonged, stress and burnout may be experienced. Critics argue that the pressure of testing causes teachers to dumb-down the curriculum, reduce critical thinking activities, rely more heavily on drills and worksheets, and reduce the quality of education (Corbett & Wilson, 1991; Smith, 1991; Smith & Rottenburg, 1991). Schools in need of improvement due to low academic performance may experience ongoing frustration as they strive to improve student achievement while attempting to maintain high-quality instruction.

### **The Relationship Between Teacher Stress/Burnout and Pressure to Increase Test Scores**

More and more teachers are reporting that they feel pressured to improve test scores (Koretz, Mitchell, Barron, & Keith, 1996). A survey conducted by the National Board on Educational Testing (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003) revealed that many teachers from across the United States feel pressure to improve student performance on test scores and narrow their curriculum to spend more time on tested items and teaching test-taking skills. The results also indicated that approximately 70% of the teachers in this

study did not view their state-mandated testing program as beneficial for improving student learning.

Accountability for schools and student performance through NCLB is also measured through high-stakes testing. As mandated by the No Child Left Behind legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a), high-stakes testing results become part of each state's school accountability program (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The accountability programs must include reporting systems that inform the public about the federal report card labels assigned to each district school. While the tests are a way to determine levels of student achievement, they are also, in the views of some, a measure of teacher performance and ability. In light of this accountability, there is a tremendous pressure for districts, schools, administrators, teachers, and students alike to raise test scores.

### **The Relationship Between Teacher Stress/Burnout and Adequate Yearly Progress**

NCLB requires states to make steady progress, also known as adequate yearly progress (AYP). An important factor when considering AYP is the inclusion of all subgroups in the overall reporting of each school. Those subgroups, which include special education, economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners, and under-represented student populations, are an integral part of the adequate yearly progress and must also meet the proficiency percentage dictated for each school year (NCLB, 2002).

NCLB provides a new federal definition of AYP that is more specific than the 1994 reauthorization, while still preserving some state latitude:

1. Each state, using data from the 2001-2002 school year, must establish a baseline for measuring the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the state's

proficiency level of academic achievement. The state must use the higher of either the proficiency level of the state's lowest-achieving group or the proficiency level of the students at the 20th percentile in the state (NCLB, 2002).

2. States must develop a 12-year plan for all students, within each of the "disaggregated" subgroups, to attain proficiency (NCLB, 2002).

3. States must develop annual measurable objectives that are consistent across schools and student subgroups and show proficiency increases in equal increments over 12 years, with the first increase required to occur in not more than 2 years, and the remaining increases to occur within each subsequent 3-year period (NCLB, 2002).

4. States may establish a uniform procedure for averaging data over multiple years and across grades in a school (NCLB, 2002).

Schools that fail to meet adequate yearly progress goals become improvement schools that face corrective and restructuring actions dependent upon the number of years they remain in improvement status defined in a federal guide (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) as follows:

1. A Title 1 school that has not made adequate yearly progress, as defined by the state, for 2 consecutive school years will be identified by the district before the beginning of the next school year as needing improvement. The school must develop an improvement plan and use 10% of its Title 1 Part A funding for professional development activities (U.S Department of Education, 2003).

2. If the school does not make adequate yearly progress for 3 years, the school must continue the activities previously identified as well as provide supplemental educational services, such as tutoring or remedial classes to students from low-income

families (U. S Department of Education, 2003).

3. If the school fails to make adequate yearly progress for 4 years, the school must continue the activities previously identified and implement at least one of the following actions:

- a. The district must implement certain corrective actions to improve the school, such as replacing staff.
  - b. Institute and fully implement a new curriculum, including providing appropriate professional development for all relevant staff that is based on scientifically based research and offer substantial promise of improving educational achievement for low-achieving students and enabling the school to make AYP.
  - c. Significantly decrease management authority at the school level.
  - d. Extend the school year or school day for the school.
  - e. Restructure the school's internal organization structure.
  - f. Appoint an outside expert to advise the school on its progress toward AYP
- (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

4. If a school fails to make adequate yearly progress for a fifth year, the school must continue the activities previously identified and the school district must initiate plans for restructuring the school. This may include reopening the school as a charter, replacing all or most of the school staff, contracting with a private management company to operate the school, and turning the operation of the school over to the state education agency if permitted under the state law and agreed to by the state (U. S Department of Education, 2003).

Porter et al. (2005) noted the positive intent of identifying schools that need improvement so corrective action could be taken so all students achieve. However, these schools' labeled designation, meant to support students, has come to have a very negative connotation for the schools. This places additional pressure and accountability on teachers and schools. Teachers have reported increased stress and reduced morale related to demoralizing reporting systems (Boaler, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Taylor et al., 2003).

### **The Relationship Between Teacher Stress/Burnout and Years of Teaching Experience**

Some of the background factors that studies have associated with teacher burnout include gender (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984; Ogus, Greenglass, & Burke, 1990), age (Pedrabissi, Rolland, & Santinello, 1993), years of experience (Borg & Falzon, 1989), and grade level taught (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984).

In a study of Ohio teachers, Feitler and Tokar (1982) surveyed 81 first-year teachers and found that only 16% indicated that their jobs were very to extremely stressful. Seventy-seven percent rated their jobs as mildly to moderately stressful, and 7% reported no job-related stress. In the same study, 350 teachers within 5 years of retirement were surveyed. Eighteen percent reported that their jobs were in the very to extremely stressful range. Twelve percent of this group reported that their jobs were not at all stressful.

Borthwick et al. (1982) surveyed 1,091 American elementary and secondary school teachers using the Maslach Burnout Inventory to determine the relationship between level of teacher burnout and years of teaching experience. Using the three burnout subscales of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal



accomplishment, the results indicated that teachers with fewer years of experience exhibited a higher level of burnout. In contrast, Borg and Falzon (1989) studied 844 Maltese elementary school teachers and found that teachers with more than 20 years of experience exhibited significantly higher levels of stress than their less experienced colleagues.

### **The Relationship Between Teacher Stress/Burnout and Class Size**

According to Health and Education Research Operative Services (2003), the preponderance of research indicates that learning increases as class size decreases especially in the primary grades and in schools serving high numbers of minority and low socioeconomic status students and students with exceptional needs. An optimum class size of 15 students in regular classroom programs is recommended with lower class sizes for programs serving students with special needs. French (1993) examined 223 Colorado elementary teachers' perception of class size; they reported greater stress when teaching larger classes than when teaching classes with lower pupil-teacher ratios.

Finn, Pannozzo, and Achilles (2003) reviewed nine studies on the relationship between classroom size and the impact on teacher satisfaction. Their review found the following: Teachers noted improved interpersonal relations and interactions with students in small classes; teachers in small classes had more knowledge of children, their families, and their home background; there were more student interactions and it was less likely that students were "fooling around" or being disruptive; and teachers in large classes spent more time on "nonacademic management" of class. Large classes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, and marking, assessment, and planning. Teachers in large classes who spend more time in establishing classroom

control and discipline lose their effectiveness as a teacher (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown, & Martin, 2007).

During President Clinton's administration, Congress provided over \$4 billion in grants to help schools reduce class size to an average of 18 students per class in the primary grades. The funding provided under the Clinton administration for this purpose is currently eliminated (Health and Education Research Operative Services, 2003; Weaver, 2006). Under the NCLB Act of 2001, that program was consolidated into a more general teacher-quality block-grant program. Despite research findings supporting class-size reduction, class size, and teacher-to-student ratio, these are not addressed by NCLB

### **Summary**

The literature supports a relationship between teacher stress and their attitudes towards the NCLB Act (Esteve, 2000; Troman & Woods, 2001) and substantiates the notion that teachers who experience stress over long periods of time may experience burnout (Farber, 1998; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Troman & Woods, 2001). While years of teaching experience would seem to be an important variable in terms of teacher burnout, the research is sparse and inconsistent (Byrne, 1999). However, class size has emerged as one of the most frequently mentioned environmental stressors in studies using self-report methods (Sandholtz, 1990) and the literature supports the relationship between class size and both stress and teacher satisfaction.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research study was to explore the extent to which variations in the three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) are influenced by teachers' attitude toward the No Child Left Behind Act. This study also examined the extent to which years of teaching experience and class size influence differences in reported levels of burnout.

The dependent variable for this study was the degrees of burnout experienced as indicated by the subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and the independent variables were teachers' perceptions of the mandates of the No Child Left Behind and the following demographic variables: years of teaching experience and class size.

Teachers took two surveys: Teachers on No Child Left Behind and the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator Survey (Maslach et al., 1996). These instruments were used to investigate each research question concerning burnout's three subscales, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment as they relate to the independent variables.

Chapter 3 presents the following sections to describe this quantitative study: (a) research design, (b) population and sample, (c) instrumentation, (d) procedures, and (e) data analysis.

### **Research Design**

This study used a survey research design which was cross-sectional in nature. There are two types of research designs: Longitudinal and cross-sectional (Wiersma, 2000). In longitudinal survey research, data are collected over a period of time. In cross-sectional survey research, data are collected at one point in time. This study used a cross-sectional survey because the sample of elementary and secondary teachers was surveyed once and the data were collected on many different kinds of people in a relatively short period of time. The purpose for this design was to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences could be made about some characteristics, attitudes, or behaviors of the population (Babbie, 1990). This survey research design is often used because of the low cost and easily accessible information.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) stated that survey research is the preferred research strategy when the investigator is examining “the incidence, frequency and distribution of the characteristics of an identified population. In addition to being descriptive, surveys can also be used to explore relationships between variables” (p. 233). This study explores and describes the relationship among the variables examined, the perceived levels of burnout and teachers’ attitude toward the No Child Left Behind Act.

### **Population and Sample**

I obtained opinions from both elementary- and secondary-level teachers regarding their attitudes toward No Child Left Behind. In addition, these teachers took the Maslach

Burnout Inventory—an instrument that assessed levels of burnout. A non-random sampling procedure was used. The teacher population for Berrien County was approximately 1,535. From this population, 236 highly qualified teachers from Grades 3–12 who were employed in the elementary and secondary public schools in the Berrien County, Michigan, school districts represented the sample that participated in this study. There were thirteen high schools, fourteen middle schools, and 27 elementary schools in Berrien County, Michigan. The teachers from three high schools, five middle schools, and 15 elementary schools were represented in the sample that participated in this study.

### **Instrumentation**

Researchers have studied stress and burnout extensively, and as the understanding of stress changed over time, different models of stress were developed. However, researchers have indicated that teachers who experience stress over long periods of time may experience what is known as burnout (Farber, 1998; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Troman & Woods, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the intended focus is on the Maslach Burnout Inventory MBI-ES (see appendix), which is the most commonly used measurement for assessing burnout today. This psychometric instrument was developed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson in 1981. It is a widely accepted instrument (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2002; Byrne, 1993; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993) with “the strongest psychometric properties” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 401).

The most recent edition of the MBI manual (Maslach et al., 1996) contains three versions: The MBI—Human Services Survey is for those who work with people; the MBI—Educators Survey is designed specifically for educators and measures depersonalization between teachers and students; the MBI—General Survey applies to

people who work in other occupations. According to Maslach et al. (1996), recognition of the pervasiveness of burnout ultimately led to the development of the General Survey (MGI-GS), which is described in the latest edition of the manual, along with the original Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) and the Education Survey. The Education Survey, the MBI-ES, was developed about 10 years after the original Human Services Survey in response to the high interest in teacher burnout (Maslach et al., 1996).

Bakker et al. (2002) validated the three-factor model of the MBI thereby supporting three separate burnout dimensions. Aluja, Blanch, and Garcia (2005) concluded that these burnout dimensions are measured by the MBI regardless of the country and the language used. Some researchers identified concerns with the MBI. Barnett, Brennan, and Gareis (1999) identified two flaws: Half of the items to assess feelings did not directly concern feelings, and response categories were not mutually exclusive. Also, the exhaustion and depersonalization scale items are worded negatively, and personal accomplishment scale items are worded positively which can lead to acquiescence tendencies (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

There are some concerns regarding the three factor structure but it is still considered the definitive measure of burnout. It is used by organizations and by researchers to assess how employees experience their work. It is a reliable questionnaire that provides a concise perspective on the energy, involvement, and effectiveness of staff members on the job (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 155).

The MBI instrument has been widely used in “over 90% of journal articles and dissertations” to address burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Schaap, & Kladler, 2001, p. 566). This instrument was developed based on the theory that individuals whose

profession involves working closely with clients/students to enhance growth or change, and whose measurement of professional competency/success is based on the changes demonstrated by their clients/students, may face, over time, a degree of chronic stress which may result in the condition defined as burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). The MBI-ES (Maslach et al., 1996) is a 22-item survey which consists of three subscales of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment.

*Emotional Exhaustion* (EE): This subscale, consisting of nine items (1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20) focuses on the extent to which individuals feel themselves to be in a state of emotional bankruptcy. The psychological resources of these individuals are depleted and they are no longer able to give of themselves as they have in the past (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

*Depersonalization* (DP): This subscale, consisting of five items (5, 10, 11, 15, and 22), looks at the degree to which individuals pull back from interaction with others, peers as well as clients/students. In an effort to protect/conservate their reduced supply of emotional energy, individuals may develop a cynical or negative attitude toward their clients/students (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

*Personal Accomplishment* (PA): This subscale, consisting of eight items (4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21), looks at an individual assessment of their professional accomplishments in relationship to their work with people (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

The only modification made to questions on the MBI-ES as compared to other MBI surveys is the use of the word *student* in place of *recipient*. As with other MBI surveys, the MBI-ES measures each burnout subscale separately. MBI surveys measure frequency using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*everyday*).

## Reliability

Recent factor analysis studies by Bakker et al. (2002) and Schaufeli et al. (2001) confirmed the validity and reliability of the three-subscale structure of the MBI as reported in the MBI manual (Maslach et al., 1996). Supporting the reliability of the instrument's internal consistencies was Cronbach's alpha as reported by Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) and Gold (1984). Schaufeli et al. (2001) noted more generally that estimates are typically above .70. See Table 1.

## Validity

Maslach et al. (1996) established criterion validity for the MBI, that is, how one variable or set of variables predicts an outcome based on information from other variables. The MBI manual reports significant correlations between current on-the-job activity and the MBI subscales. There are five studies reported with three service professions—police work, medicine, and social service—that provide support for criterion validity. For example, coworker satisfaction rating correlated  $r=-.16$  with EE,  $-.41$  with DP, and  $.40$  with PA.

Table 1

### *Cronbach's Coefficient Alphas for the Maslach*

Scale	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha Iwanicki & Schwab (1981)	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha Gold (1984)	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha Current Study
Emotional Exhaustion	.90	.88	.90
Depersonalization	.76	.74	.75
Personal Accomplishment	.76	.72	.83



Maslach et al. (1996) also investigated construct validity, that is, the extent to which the three MBI variables measure what they were design to measure – burnout. Evidence for this comes from the results of a factor analysis of the MBI based on a sample of 1,025 individuals and a cross-validation sample of 2,545 individuals. Results indicated that the factor structures were generally clear. The median loadings for items on EE were .65, for DP was .62, and for PA was .53. In addition, the three scales demonstrate moderate correlations with each other suggesting they are separate but related constructs.

#### A Survey for Teachers on No Child Left Behind

The other survey is The No Child Left Behind survey (see appendix) which was developed by Joan James with the input of two University of Wyoming experts in survey design. Constructs from the literature regarding the influence of NCLB and high-stakes testing on curriculum and instruction were utilized in writing the survey items. Two pilot studies utilizing this survey were conducted in an effort to achieve evidence of reliability (James, 2007). The survey was piloted with first- through sixth-grade elementary teachers in the Albany County, Wyoming, school district.

This survey contains 17 items. The first eight questions relate to the demographic data of the respondents including gender, ethnicity, grade level currently taught, years of teaching experience, class size, community size, and progress toward AYP mandates. Four statements were organized into a 5-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* with subcomponents accompanying each statement. At the end of the survey, there are four open-ended questions concerning opinions on No Child Left Behind and its AYP goals, district testing, instructional practices, and changes related to reauthorization. These open-ended survey questions allowed for nonstructured responses.

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was calculated on each of the scales from the two pilot studies to determine internal consistency. According to James (2007), Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha on the four survey scales was relatively high and can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

*Cronbach's Coefficient Alphas for the No Child Left Behind Survey*

Scale	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha James (2007)	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha Current Study
Teachers' perception of standardized testing (#'s 1–10)	.888	.86
Pressure felt by teachers to improve test scores ((#'s 11–21)	.882	.84
Standardized test effect on instructional practices (#'s 22–38)	.781	.80
Teacher opinion of NCLB and its Adequate Yearly Progress (#'s 39–48)	.840	.62

### **Cronbach's Alpha Testing for This Research Analysis**

Within this study, internal consistency reliabilities for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment estimated by Cronbach's alpha testing were .90 for emotional exhaustion, .75 for depersonalization, and .83 for personal accomplishment. These results were similar to those reported by Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) and Gold (1984).

The internal consistency reliabilities estimated by Cronbach's alpha testing was .84 for pressure to increase test scores, .80 for standardized test effect on instructional practices, .62 for NCLB and its Adequate Yearly Progress, and .86 for perception of standardized testing. These results were similar to those reported by James (2007).

## Procedures

After obtaining permission from the Andrews University Institutional Review Board (IRB), 14 superintendents within the Berrien County school district were contacted by letter. The purpose of the study and the process for data collection were explained. The district superintendents were asked to provide a list of schools to be included in the study. Six superintendents provided permission for this research to be done within their districts.

I then worked with the principal on the sites to begin the data collection process. A packet containing (a) a letter of introduction and an informed consent agreement as shown in Appendix A, (b) the NCLB survey as shown in Appendix B, and (c) the copyrighted MBI-ES instrument as shown in Appendix C was prepared for each participant. The teacher learned from the informed consent agreement that participation in the study was confidential and voluntary and that they had the right to terminate participation in the study at any time. The consent also informed participants that there were no anticipated risks to teachers but that there might be benefits derived from this study's results.

My assistant delivered the packets to the school and discussed with the principal the contents of the packets and the deadline date for collection of data. Each participant was asked to place his or her completed surveys in a sealed envelope and return it to the school office. The designated researcher's assistant was asked to be responsible for collection of surveys from the main office. Otherwise, I collected the surveys from the school secretary.

## Data Analysis

The following research questions were analyzed using the following statistical procedures (see Table 3).

This study used descriptive statistics to describe teachers' responses to the No Child Left Behind as it relates to adequate yearly progress goals, pressure to improve test scores, standardized testing, and the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices.

Table 3

### *Research Question Type and Testing*

Research Questions	Dependent	Independent	Statistical Test
Q1	EE, DP, PA	Teacher's attitude toward No Child Left Behind	Descriptive Statistics Frequency Distribution Means and Standard Deviation
Q2	EE, DP, PA	Levels of burnout among teachers	Descriptive Statistics Frequency Distribution Means and Standard Deviation
Q3	EE, DP, PA	Attitudes toward No Child Left Behind	Canonical Correlation
Q4	EE, DP, PA	Teacher's years of service Teacher-student ratio	MANOVA

*Note.* Abbreviations EE, DP, PA represent emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment respectively.

Descriptive statistics was also implemented to examine reported levels of burnout among teachers.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) procedures were used to investigate how the dependent variable, burnout, as manifested by emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, was affected by the independent variables, years of teaching, and class size.

Canonical correlation was employed to determine how the dependent variable, burnout, as manifested by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, was influenced by the following set of independent variables: Teacher perceptions of standardized testing, pressure to improve test scores, standardized test effect on instructional practices, and teacher perception of Adequate Yearly Progress.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is divided into several sections. The first section focuses on the purpose of the study and is followed by a description of the participating sample. The major section of this chapter will review the analyses of the research questions in detail.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward the "No Child Left Behind" Law (AYP goals, opinions of standardized test, pressure to increase test scores, and instructional practices) and perceived levels of burnout among teachers in Grades 3 through 12 in Berrien County, Michigan. This study also examined the extent to which class size and the years of teaching experience influenced differences in reported levels of burnout.

This study examined the following areas as they relate to the NCLB and burnout:

1. What are the teacher's attitudes toward No Child Left Behind as it relates to
  - a. adequate yearly progress goals
  - b. pressure to improve test scores
  - c. standardized testing
  - d. the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices?
2. What are the levels of burnout among teachers?

3. To what extent are measures of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) related to attitudes toward NCLB with respect to
  - a. adequate yearly progress goals
  - b. pressure to improve test scores
  - c. standardized testing
  - d. the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices?
4. To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to years of teaching experience?
5. To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to class size?

### **Description of Respondents**

One hundred eight teacher respondents participated in this study, representing approximately 47% of the total number of teachers selected for this research. The sample represented third- through 12th-grade teachers who were employed in the Berrien County school districts during the 2011-2012 school year. Seventy-eight respondents were females (72.2%), 29 were males (26.9%), and one was unidentified (0.9%). The respondents consisted of 42 elementary teachers, 17 junior-high teachers, and 49 high-school teachers.

Twenty-one teachers had 1–7 years of teaching experience (19.4%), 22 teachers had 8–13 years of teaching experience (20.4%), 22 teachers had 14-20 years of teaching (20.4%), 26 teachers had 21 or more years of teaching experience (24.1%), and 17 were unidentified (15.7%). Thirty teachers had 1–22 students per class (27.8%), 44 teachers

had 23–27 students per class (40.7%), and 34 teachers had over 27 students per class (31.5%).

The AYP status categories were comprised of teachers who taught in schools that had or had not met adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals in math and/or language arts in all disaggregated categories during the past 3 years (2008, 2009, and 2010). All of the schools that participated in the study met AYP within the last 3 years with the exception of two high schools. One of the high schools met AYP within the last 2 years and the other had not met AYP once in the last 3 years and is currently in the NCLB phase seven. In phase seven, the school must continue to implement the restructuring plan previously designed and provide choice, transportation, and supplemental services. Monitoring will be implemented to seek evidence of improved results.

The demographic data concerning the number of teacher respondents in each of the categories described above can be seen in Table 4.

### **Analyses of Research Questions**

The research questions of this study focused on relationships between reported levels of the MBI-ES (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment subscales) and the consequences of the implementation of the No Child Left Behind legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a) with the associated variables (teachers' perception of standardized testing, pressure to increase test scores, adequate yearly progress, and the effect of standardized test on instructional practice).

The first research question asks: "What are the teacher's attitudes toward the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) with respect to standardized testing, pressure to improve test scores, standardized tests' effect on instructional practices, and adequate yearly progress?"



Table 4

*Participating Demographic Data (n=108)*

Variables		N	%
Gender	Male	29	26.9
	Female	78	72.2
	Not reported	1	0.9
Grade Level	3rd–6 <sup>th</sup>	42	38.9
	7th–8 <sup>th</sup>	17	15.7
	9th–12 <sup>th</sup>	49	45.4
Teaching Experience	1-7	21	19.4
	8–13	22	20.4
	14–20	22	24.1
	21+	26	24.1
	Not reported	17	12.0
Number of Students	1–22 (small class size)	30	27.8
	23–27 (average class size)	44	40.7
	28+ (large class size)	34	31.5
Schools	Met AYP	12	85.7
	Has not met AYP	2	14.3

Item statistics for each of the four aspects of NCLB are presented in Tables 5–8.

### Opinions of Standardized Test

On the survey, teachers were given the opportunity to respond to words describing the characteristics of standardized tests. The teachers could indicate their opinion on a 7-point semantic differential scale. A response of 1 through 3 was considered negative, a response greater than 3 and less than 5 was considered neutral, and a response of 5 and greater was considered positive. Scores around 4 on the semantic differential scale ( $3 < x < 5$ ) were considered neutral since 4 is the median point on the semantic differential scale.

On the opinions of standardized testing subscale, the overall means for this subscale was 3.92. One may be inclined to believe that this generally indicates a neutral response among the subjects. However, careful analysis of the data as seen in table 5, clearly indicates that the subjects reported a negative response to the majority of the subscale items. On the variable ineffective-effective, more than 50% of the respondents indicated a negative response to the effectiveness of standardized testing. A summary of how teachers responded to opinions of standardized testing can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5

*Opinions of Standardized Testing (n=108)*

Variables	Mean	SD	Negative Ratings (1–3)	Positive Ratings (5–7)
Valid	4.32	2.04	33.3%	38.9%
Informative	4.20	1.56	43.5%	31.4%
Important	4.13	1.63	42.6%	33.4%
Necessary	3.99	1.52	37.0%	38.0%
Beneficial	3.94	1.44	30.6%	29.7%
Accurate	3.88	1.50	41.7%	30.6%
Appropriate	3.88	1.37	33.4%	29.6%
Worthwhile	3.84	1.44	34.3%	31.4%
Useful	3.81	1.52	39.8%	37.1%
Effective	3.27	1.52	54.6%	20.3%
Opinion of standardize test (Total)	39.28	10.55		
Overall Means/SD	3.92	1.05		

*Note.* The means are the averages of the scale items. Scores greater than 3 and less than 5 were considered neutral and were not included in the table.

### Pressure to Improve Students' Test Scores

On this survey, teachers were given the opportunity to respond to the extent of pressure that was felt from the following individuals or groups to improve students' test scores. The teachers could indicate their opinion on a 5-point Likert scale. A response of

1 or 2 was considered almost no pressure to some pressure, a response greater than 2 and less than 4 was considered moderate pressure, and a response of 4 or 5 was considered quite a bit of pressure to a great deal of pressure.

On the pressure to improve students' test score subscale, the overall mean was 3.10. One may be inclined to believe that this generally indicates a moderate pressure response among the subjects. However, careful analysis of the data on this subscale, pressure to improve students' test scores, 50% or more of the respondents reported feeling 'quite a bit of pressure to a great deal of pressure' from the following variables: State Department of Education (3.91), No Child Left Behind Act (3.85), myself (3.74), U.S. Department of Education (3.60), the newspaper media (3.55), and District Administration (3.45) to improve students' standardized test scores.

Fifty percent or more of the respondents reported feeling 'almost no pressure to some pressure' to improve students' standardized test scores from the following variables: Parents (2.09), other teachers (1.98), and students (1.61). A summary of how much pressure teacher respondents felt to improve standardized test scores from a variety of sources can be seen in Table 6.

#### Standardized Test Effect on Instructional Practices

On this survey, teachers were given the opportunity to respond to how state and districts' tests affect their instructional practices. The teachers indicated their opinion on a 5-point Likert scale. A response of 1 or 2 was considered *strongly disagree* to *disagree*, a response greater than 2 and less than 4 was considered neutral, and a response of 4 or 5 was considered *agree* to *strongly agree*.

Table 6

*Pressure to Improve Students' Test Scores (n=108)*

Variables	Mean	SD	Almost No pressure/Some Pressure Ratings of 1 or 2	Moderate Pressure Rating of 3	Quite a bit/A great deal of pressure Ratings of 4 or 5
State Dept. of Education	3.91	1.44	21.3%	5.6%	73.2%
No Child Left Behind Act	3.85	1.49	21.3%	8.3%	70.4%
Myself	3.74	1.05	9.3%	36.1%	54.6%
U.S. Dept. of Education	3.60	1.44	21.3%	10.2%	68.5%
Newspaper Media	3.55	1.40	25.0%	13.0%	62.0%
District administration	3.45	1.35	26.8%	16.7%	56.5%
Local school board	3.10	1.45	37.1%	18.5%	44.4%
Principal	3.04	1.41	36.1%	.9%	36.1%
Parents	2.09	1.09	63.8%	25.9%	10.2%
Other teachers	1.98	1.22	70.4%	22.2%	6.5%
Students	1.61	1.16	86.1%	7.4%	5.6%
Pressure to improve test scores (Total)	34.16	9.22			
Overall Means/SD	3.10	0.83			

*Note.* The means are averages of the scale items, where 1=almost no pressure and 5=a great deal of pressure.

On the standardized test effect on instructional practices subscale, the overall mean was 3.28; one may be inclined to believe that this generally indicates a neutral response among the subjects. However, careful analysis of this subscale, standardized test effect on instructional practices, clearly indicates that 50% or more of the respondents 'agree to strongly agree' that the following variables had an impact on how the state and district's standardized tests affected instructional practices: Teaching to the standards (4.23), teaching content on the state/district test (4.10), elimination of curriculum material that is not tested (4.00), a lot of time on test-taking skills (3.55), rote drill in teaching (3.52), emphasis on factual recall knowledge (3.39), the use of explicit instruction (3.34), clarification of learning goals (3.32), and effective teaching of students who struggle academically (3.28).

Fifty percent or more of the respondents disagree to strongly disagree that the following variables had an impact on how the state and district's standardized test affected instructional practices: Effective teaching of high performing students (2.66).

A summary of how the state and district's standardized tests affected instructional practices can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7

*Effects of Standardized Test on Instructional Practices (n=108)*

Variables			Disagree/Strongly Disagree Ratings of 1 or 2	Agree/Strongly Agree Ratings of 4 or 5
Standardized Testing Encourages	Mean	SD		
Teaching to the standards	4.23	0.78	2.8%	87.0%
Teaching content on the state/district test	4.10	0.83	2.8%	78.7%
Elimination of curriculum material that is not tested	4.00	1.11	12.9%	77.8%
A lot of time on test-taking skills	3.55	1.01	17.6%	59.2%
Rote drill in teaching	3.52	1.16	20.4%	57.4%
Emphasize on factual recall knowledge	3.39	1.08	19.4%	53.7%
The use of explicit instruction	3.34	0.99	21.3%	50.0%
Clarification of learning goals	3.32	1.14	23.2%	54.6%
Effective teaching of students who struggle academically	3.28	1.32	30.6%	53.7%
Collaboration with other teachers	3.17	1.12	28.7%	47.2%
Meeting the needs of differentiated learners	3.08	1.33	33.3%	43.5%
Teaching more critical thinking skills	2.96	1.25	39.8%	45.4%
Emphasis on deep-level understanding	2.92	1.20	43.5%	38.0%
The use of more student inquiry	2.91	1.15	39.8%	37.1%
Teaching in more student-centered ways	2.76	1.13	46.3%	31.5%
Effective teaching of high performing students	2.66	1.23	52.7%	27.8%
Changes in instructional practices	2.63	1.08	46.3%	21.3%
Effects of Standardized Test on Instructional Practices (Total)	55.88	9.48		
Overall Means/SD	3.28	0.55		

*Note.* The means are averages of the scale items, where 1=*strongly disagree* and 5=*strongly agree*. Scores greater than 2 and less than 4 were considered neutral and were not included in the table.

### No Child Left Behind and Its Adequate Yearly Progress Goals

On this survey, teachers were given the opportunity to indicate their opinion of the No Child Left Behind Act and its adequate yearly progress goals. The teachers indicated their opinion on a 5-point Likert scale. A response of 1 or 2 was considered *strongly disagree* to *disagree*, a response greater than 2 and less than 4 was considered neutral, and a response of 4 or 5 was considered *agree* to *strongly agree*.

On the responses from the No Child Left Behind and its Adequate Yearly Progress Goals subscale, the overall means was 2.80. One may be inclined to believe that this generally indicates a neutral response among the subjects. However, careful analysis of this subscale, No Child Left Behind and its Adequate Yearly Progress Goals, clearly indicates that 50% or more of the respondents ‘agree to strongly agreed’ that the following variables: Teaching to the test (4.25), contributes to teacher burnout (4.05), and elimination of non-tested curriculum (3.71) were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress.

On the responses from the No Child Left Behind and its Adequate Yearly Progress Goals subscale, 50% or more of the respondents ‘strongly disagree to disagree’ that the following variables: Teachers to improve teaching effectiveness (2.50), instructional decision that will be best for the students (2.12), high-quality education for all students (2.08), reduction in achievement gap (2.01), and the use of an effective way to assess the quality of schools were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress.

A summary of the items that were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8

*No Child Left Behind and Its Adequate Yearly Progress Goal (n=108)*

Variables NCLB With Its AYP goals encourages:	Mean	SD	Strongly Disagree/Disagree Ratings of 1 or 2	Agree/Strongly Agree Ratings of 4 or 5
Teaching to the test	4.25	0.84	2.8%	85.2%
Or contributes to “teacher burnout”	4.05	0.88	4.6%	75.9%
Elimination of non-tested curriculum.	3.71	1.14	14.8	65.8%
The use of “best practices”	2.68	1.18	48.1%	32.4%
Teachers to improve their teaching with all students	2.66	1.19	49.1%	26.8%
Teachers to improve teaching effectiveness	2.50	1.10	56.4%	23.2%
Instructional decision that will be best	2.12	1.00	70.4%	12.0%
for the students				
High quality education for all students	2.08	0.96	70.4%	9.2%
Reduction in achievement gap	2.01	0.92	67.6%	5.6%
The use of an effective way to assess the quality of schools	1.99	1.07	75.0%	10.2%
No Child Left Behind and its Adequate Yearly Progress (Total)	28.09	4.97		
Overall Means/SD	2.80	0.49		

*Note.* The means are averages of the scale items, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Scores greater than 2 and less than 4 were considered neutral and were not included in the table.

### What Are the Reported Levels of Burnout Among Teachers?

Low, moderate, and high burnout scores provided by the MBI manual (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 6) were used to calculate frequencies related to the sample of teacher respondent ( $n=108$ ). Range of scores for low, moderate and high levels for each MBI subscale can be seen in Table 9.

On the responses from the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the overall means for

Table 9

*Range of Subscale Score*

MBI Subscales	Low	Moderate	High
EE	0-16	17-26	27+
DP	0-8	9-13	14+
PA	37+	31-36	0-30

*Note.* EE=Emotional Exhaustion; DP=Depersonalization; PA=Personal Accomplishment.

emotional exhaustion was 24.96, which indicated that the respondents experienced moderate levels of emotional exhaustion. On depersonalization, the overall means was 6.19, which indicated that the respondents experienced low levels of depersonalization. On personal accomplishment, the overall means was 38.53, which indicated that the respondents experienced low levels of personal accomplishment. See Table 10.

The range of scores for low, moderate, and high levels for each MBI subscale was used to determine the percentage of respondents experiencing low, moderate, and high levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The results are shown in Table 11.

Based on the results of experienced burnout as manifested by emotional exhaustion, 25.9% of the respondent scores reflected a moderate degree of emotional exhaustion while 47.2% of the respondent scores reflected a high degree of emotional exhaustion. When combined, 73.1% of the respondents experienced moderate to high degrees of emotional exhaustion. By contrast, 26.9% experienced a low degree of emotional exhaustion.

Based on results of experienced burnout as manifested by depersonalization, 20.4% of the respondent scores reflected a moderate degree of depersonalization while



18.5% of the respondent scores reflected a high degree of depersonalization. When combined, 38.9% of the respondents experienced moderate to high degrees of depersonalization. By contrast, 61.1% experienced a low degree of depersonalization.

Based on results of experienced burnout as manifested by personal accomplishment, 24.1% of the respondent scores reflected a moderate degree of personal accomplishment while 10.2% of the scores reflected a high degree of personal accomplishment. When combined, 34.3% of the respondents experienced moderate to high degrees of personal accomplishment. By contrast, 65.7% reflected a low degree of personal accomplishment (see Table 12).

Table 10

*Means and Standard Deviations for the MBI Subscales*

	EE	DP	PA
<i>M</i>	24.96	6.19	38.53
<i>SD</i>	12.08	6.44	6.90

*Note.* EE=Emotional Exhaustion; DP=Depersonalization; PA=Personal Accomplishment.

Table 11

*Range of Experienced Burnout (n=108)*

	EE		DP		PA	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Low	29	26.9	66	61.1	71	65.7
Moderate	28	25.9	22	20.4	26	24.1
High	51	47.2	20	18.5	11	10.2

*Note.* EE=Emotional Exhaustion; DP=Depersonalization; PA=Personal Accomplishment.

Table 12

*Case Summaries*

EE	DP	PA	N	%
Low	Low	Low	25	23.1%
Low	Low	Moderate	1	0.9%
Low	Moderate	Low	3	2.7%
Moderate	Low	Low	16	14.8%
Moderate	Low	Moderate	6	5.5%
Moderate	Moderate	Low	2	1.8%
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	1	0.9%
Moderate	High	Low	1	0.9%
Moderate	High	Moderate	1	0.9%
Moderate	High	High	1	0.9%
High	Low	Low	11	10.1%
High	Low	Moderate	5	4.6%
High	Low	High	2	1.8%
High	Moderate	Low	9	8.3%
High	Moderate	Moderate	5	4.6%
High	Moderate	High	2	1.8%
High	High	Low	4	3.7%
High	High	Moderate	7	6.4%
High	High	High	6	5.5%

*Note.* EE=Emotional Exhaustion; DP=Depersonalization; PA=Personal Accomplishment.

Teacher respondents' scores may vary on the MBI subscales, but according to the Maslach Burnout Inventory, burnout is defined by a high score on the emotional exhaustion subtest and a high score on the depersonalization subtest and a low score on the personal accomplishment subtest. Based on the case summaries of each respondent, 3.7% of the respondents' scores reflected levels of burnout.

However, the literature has indicated that emotional exhaustion is linked to job-related stress and can have an impact on depersonalization. In addition to the scores that reflected levels of burnout, 46% of the respondents' scores reflected high levels of emotional exhaustion and 18% of the respondents' scores reflected high levels of depersonalization. Further discussion regarding high levels of emotional exhaustion will

be presented in Chapter 5. A summary of the respondents' scores on the MBI subscales can be seen in Table 13.

To what extent are measures of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) related to attitudes toward NCLB with respect to

- a. adequate yearly progress
- b. pressure to improve test scores
- c. standardized testing
- d. the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices?

A canonical correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether four predictors—adequate yearly progress, pressure to increase test scores, standardized testing, and effect on standardized test on instructional practices—are related to measures of burnout. This section presents the findings from analysis of the data.

Table 13

*Zero-Order Correlation (Includes Means and Standard Deviation)*

	EE	DP	PA	PITS	STAIP	AYP	OT	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
EE	-	.61*	-.53*	.24	-.30	-.21	-.33	24.96	12.08
DP		-	-.59*	.06	-.23	-.10	-.25	6.19	6.44
PA			-	-.09	.25	.13	.14	38.53	6.90
PITS				-	-.13	-.09	-.10	34.16	9.22
STAIP					-	.55	.25	55.88	9.48
AYP						-	.34	28.09	4.97
OT							-	39.28	10.55

*Note.* EE=Emotional Exhaustion; DP=Depersonalization; PA=Personal Accomplishment; PITS=Pressure to Increase Students' Test Scores; STAIP=Standardized Tests' Effect on Instructional Practices; AYP=Adequate Yearly Progress; OT=Opinions of Standardized Test.

\*Significant at the 0.05 level.

Zero-order correlation between variables of burnout and variables of the NCLB are shown in Table 14. To determine the degree to which the variables are related, the most common measure of correlation, the Pearson Correlation, was used as the guideline for interpreting positive or negative correlations (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003). See Table 14 for estimates for interpreting strengths of correlations.

Table 14

*Pearson's Correlation*

<i>R</i>	Relationship
+.90 to 1.00	Very high positive
+.70 to +.90	High positive
+.50 to +.70	Moderate positive
+.30 to +.50	Low positive
.00 to .30	Little if any
-.30 to -.50	Low negative
-.50 to -.70	Moderate negative
-.70 to -.90	High negative
-.90 to -1.00	Very high negative

There is a moderate relationship between the burnout variables with a moderate positive relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization (.61) and a moderate negative relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Personal

Accomplishment (-.53) and Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment (-.59).

There is a low to moderate relationship between the NCLB variables with a moderate positive relationship between AYP goals and Standardized Test Effect on Instructional Practice (.55) and a low positive relationship between Opinion of Standardized Test and AYP goals (.34). There is a low to small relationship between the burnout variables and the NCLB variables with a low negative relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and

Standardized Test Effect on Instructional Practice (-.30) and a low negative relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Opinion of Standardized Test (-.33).

To further examine the relationship between burnout and the NCLB variables, a canonical correlation analysis was performed. The analysis yielded three functions with squared canonical correlations of 0.19, 0.03, and 0.01 for each successive function. Only one function of the model was statistically significant using the Wilks's lambda,  $\lambda=.768$ ,  $F=12$ ,  $n=108$ , 27.215,  $p<.05$ . The function that was significant indicated that the independent variables (NCLB variables) explained 19% of the variance of the dependent variables (MBI subscales). Canonical loadings, standardized coefficients, canonical correlations, and variance (% within set variance) are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

*Canonical Correlation Analysis*

Set		Canonical Loading	Standardized Canonical
1	Emotional Exhaustion	-.999	-.955
	Depersonalization	-.649	-.054
	Personal Accomplishment	.555	.021
	% of Variance	.576	
	Redundancy	.111	
2	Pressure to Increase Test Scores	-.542	-.421
	Standardized Test Effect on Instructional Practices	.684	.497
	Annual Yearly Progress	.485	-.029
	Opinions on Standardized Testing	.753	.593
	% of Variance	39.1	
	Redundancy	.075	
	Canonical Correlation	.439	
	Wilks'	.768	
	Chi square	27.215	
	Df	12.000	
	P	.007	

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), canonical loadings of 0.33 are considered for interpretation (p. 199). Thus, the first canonical variate indicated that low scores in emotional exhaustion (-.99) and depersonalization (-.64) and a high score in

personal accomplishment (.55) are associated with low scores in pressure to increase test scores (-.54) and high scores in standardized test effect on instructional practices (.68), annual yearly progress (.48), and opinions on standardized testing (.75). In essence, teachers who score low in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high in personal accomplishment will feel less pressure to increase test scores and have high opinions regarding standardized test and its effect on instructional practices as well as high opinions of the impact of the NCLB on adequate yearly progress.

This canonical pair constituted 58% of the variance in the MBI subscales and 39% of the NCLB variables. Additionally, 11% of the variance in the NCLB variables was accounted for by the MBI subscales and 7% of the variance in the MBI subscales was accounted for by the NCLB variables.

### **To What Extent Is Level of Burnout Related to Years of Teaching Experience?**

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between years of teaching experience on the three dependent variables: Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The multivariate test for homogeneity of dispersion matrices was performed to evaluate whether the variances and covariance among the dependent variable are the same for all levels of a factor. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) stated that the multivariate test for homogeneity is highly sensitive, so unless  $p < .001$  and the sample sizes are unequal, one should ignore it. However, if significant and one has unequal sample sizes, the test is not robust. In this case, the test for homogeneity of dispersion matrices is non-significant,  $F(18, 25397) = .880, p = .604$ , indicating that there are no differences in the matrices and

that the variance and covariance among the dependent variables are the same across the groups.

There was insignificant difference found between years of teaching experience on the linear combination of the dependent variables, Wilks's lambda,  $\lambda=.881$ ,  $F(9, 207)=1.233$ ,  $p>.05$ . The Eta Squared=.04 indicates that 4% of the multivariate variance of the dependent variables is associated with the independent variables. Table 16 contains the means and the standard deviations on the dependent variables for the three groups.

### **To What Extent Are Levels of Burnout Related to Class Size?**

Several studies have indicated a relationship between large class sizes and how they contribute to teacher stress and the effect that large classes have on teacher morale (Finn et al., 2003, French, 1993). For the purpose of this research analysis, class size is defined in three categories: The number of students in a small class size, the number of students in an average class size, and the number of students in a large class size. The National Center for Education Statistics, in the state of Michigan, has estimated the ratio of students to teachers to be 17.5 students per teacher. The U.S. Department of Education estimates the current average class size to be closer to 25 students.

Table 16

#### *Means and Standard Deviations for the MBI Subscale on Years of Teaching*

Years of Teaching Experience	Means	SD
EE	2.252	.851
DP	1.626	.811
PA	1.461	.671

*Note.* EE=Emotional Exhaustion; DP=Depersonalization; PA=Personal Accomplishment.

Based on this information, in order to determine the number of students in a class size (*small, average, or large*), class size was recoded into categories for this research analysis. I developed cut-off points in the category of class size, so that the number of respondents was fairly evenly distributed. The ratio of students to teacher is estimated to be 17.5 in the state of Michigan; therefore, I assigned *small* class size to teachers with less than 22 students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the average class size is close to 25 students, so I designated teachers with 23 through 27 students an *average* class size, and teachers with over 27 students a *large* class size (see Table 17).

Table 17

*Means and Standard Deviations for the MBI Subscale on Class Sizes*

		Mean	SD
EE	Small class size	2.133	.819
	Average class size	2.068	.949
	Large class size	2.441	.660
	Total	2.203	.840
DP	Small class size	1.233	.504
	Average class size	1.590	.787
	Large class size	1.852	.892
	Total	1.574	.787
PA	Small class size	1.333	.606
	Average class size	1.431	.661
	Large class size	1.558	.746
	Total	1.444	.674

*Note.* EE=Emotional Exhaustion; DP=Depersonalization; PA=Personal Accomplishment.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between teachers and class size on the three dependent variables: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The multivariate test for homogeneity of dispersion matrices was performed to evaluate whether the variances and covariance among the dependent variables are the same for all



levels of a factor. In this case, the test for homogeneity of dispersion matrices is non-significant,  $F(12, 43427)=2.40$ ,  $p=.004$ , indicating that there are no differences in the matrices.

There was significant difference found among teacher class size on the linear combination of the dependent variables, Wilks's lambda,  $\lambda=.883$ ,  $F(6, 206)=2.209$ ,  $p<.05$ . The Eta Squared=.06 indicates that 6% of the multivariate variance of the dependent variables is associated with the independent variables. Table 18 contains the means and the standard deviations on the dependent variables for the three groups.

Analyses of variance (ANOVA) on each dependent variable were conducted as follow-up tests to the MANOVA. Using the Bonferroni method, each ANOVA was tested at the .016 level. The ANOVA was insignificant for emotional exhaustion,  $F(2,105)=2.077$ ,  $p=.130$ ; the ANOVA for personal accomplishment was insignificant,  $F(2,105)=.902$ ,  $p=.409$ ; whereas the ANOVA for depersonalization was significant,  $F(2,105)=5.348$ ,  $p=.006$ .

Table 18

*One-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance of the Subscales of the MBI on Class Size*

Source	<i>df</i>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i> Value	<i>p</i>
Emotional Exhaustion					
Between	2	2.874	1.437	2.077	.130
Error	105	72.644	.692		
Depersonalization					
Between	2	6.140	3.070	5.348	.006
Error	105	60.288	.574		
Personal Accomplishment					
Between	2	.822	.411	.902	.409
Error	105	47.944	.456		

Post hoc analyses to the univariate ANOVA for the depersonalization subscale consisted of conducting pairwise comparisons to find which class size affected depersonalization most strongly. Each pairwise comparison was tested at the .05 divided by 3 or .016 level. The analysis indicated that there was significant difference between the means of the teachers who had small class sizes (1.233) and the means of the teachers who had large class sizes (1.852). Depersonalization was significantly affected by the small class size and the large class size in comparison to the average class size. See Table 15 for analysis.

### **Summary**

The results of the teachers' attitudes toward the No Child Left Behind survey indicated that on the opinions of standardized testing subscale, the overall means for this subscale was 3.92. However, 50% or more of the respondents indicated a negative response to the effectiveness of standardized testing.

On the pressure to improve students' test score subscale, the overall mean was 3.10. However, 50% or more of the respondents reported feeling pressure from the following variables: State Department of Education, No Child Left Behind Act, myself, U.S. Department of Education, the newspaper media, and District Administration to improve students' standardized test scores. Fifty percent or more of the respondents reported feeling some pressure to improve students' standardized test scores from the following variables: Parents, Other Teachers, and Students.

On the standardized test effect on instructional practices subscale, the overall mean was 3.28. However, 50% or more of the respondents agreed that the following variables had an impact on how the state and district's standardized tests affected

instructional practices: Teaching to the standards, teaching content on the state/district test, elimination of curriculum material that is not tested, a lot of time on test-taking skills, rote drill in teaching, emphasis on factual recall knowledge, the use of explicit instruction, clarification of learning goals, and effective teaching of students who struggle academically. Fifty percent or more of the respondents disagreed that the following variables had an impact on how the state and district's standardized test affected instructional practices: Effective teaching of high-performing students.

On the responses from the No Child Left Behind and its Adequate Yearly Progress Goals subscale, the overall means was 2.80. However, 50% or more of the respondents agreed that the following variables: Teaching to the test, contributes to teacher burnout, and elimination of non-tested curriculum were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress. Fifty percent or more of the respondents disagreed with the following variables: Teachers to improve teaching effectiveness, instructional decision that will be best for the students, high-quality education for all students, reduction in achievement gap, and the use of an effective way to assess the quality of schools were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress.

Based on the MBI, 3.7% of the teachers surveyed reflected levels of burnout. However, 47% of the teachers reflected a high degree of emotional exhaustion, 18% of the teachers reflected a high degree of Depersonalization, and 65% of the teachers reflected a low degree of Personal Accomplishment.

A canonical correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether four predictors—adequate yearly progress, pressure to increase test scores, standardized

testing, and effect on standardized test on instructional practices—are related to measures of burnout. The findings indicated that teachers who score low in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high in personal accomplishment will feel less pressure to increase test scores and have high opinions regarding standardized tests and their effect on instructional practices as well as high opinions regarding the impact of the NCLB on adequate yearly progress.

The relationship between the burnout variables and the attitudes of teachers toward the NCLB variables (adequate yearly progress, pressure to improve test scores, standardized testing, and the effect of standardize test on instructional practices) indicated that teachers who score low in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high in personal accomplishment will feel less pressure to increase test scores and have high opinions regarding standardized test and its effect on instructional practices as well as high opinions of the impact of the NCLB on adequate yearly progress.

A multivariate analysis of the variance was conducted to examine the relationship between years of teaching experience and its effect on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The findings indicated that the components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) were not affected by years of teaching experience.

A multivariate analysis of the variance was conducted to examine the relationship between teacher class size and its effect on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The findings indicated that emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment were not affected by class size. However, the analysis indicated that

depersonalization was affected by teachers who had small classes and teachers who had large class sizes.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the study, including the statement of the problem and the major methods involved. The second is the conclusion and discussion of the findings. The third section addresses implications and recommendations for future research and practice.

#### **Summary of the Problem**

This study on the teacher attitudes toward the No Child Left Behind Act and teacher burnout is very relevant in light of recent educational legislation in the United States, from the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 to the NCLB Act of 2001. The NCLB Act was devised for the purpose of holding schools accountable for raising the achievement of all students and closing the socioeconomic and racial achievement gap. While attempting to meet the needs of all students as prescribed by NCLB, teachers can suffer from prolonged stress which can lead to burnout.

Research findings on burnout have consistently indicated that dissatisfaction, pressures, and reduced morale from work demands compromise job effectiveness (Evers et al., 2002; Linden et al., 2005; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). This study focused on the relationship between components of the NCLB Act (AYP,

standardized testing, instructional practices) and the perceived levels of burnout experienced by teachers.

The overall purpose of this study was to determine patterns regarding the perceptions of elementary and secondary teachers concerning the positive and negative influence of the NCLB accountability plan and the factors that contributed to their levels of burnout. The assumption of this study is that educators will become better aware of how NCLB mandates in the workplace may affect the performance of teachers in the classroom and contribute to stress which may lead to teacher burnout. This study addresses five research questions:

1. What are the teachers' attitudes toward No Child Left Behind as they relate to
  - a. adequate yearly progress
  - b. pressure to improve test scores
  - c. standardized testing
  - d. the effects of standardized testing on instructional practices?
2. What are the perceived levels of burnout among teachers?
3. To what extent are measures of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) related to attitudes toward NCLB with respect to
  - a. adequate yearly progress
  - b. pressure to improve test scores
  - c. standardized testing
  - d. the effects of standardized testing on instructional practices?

4. To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to years of teaching experience?

5. To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to class size?

### **Summary of the Literature**

Teachers' attitudes toward the NCLB revealed that teachers expressed concern and frustration at the narrowing of curriculum content that occurs with increased focus on test scores (Hamilton et al., 2007). A survey conducted by the National Board on Educational Testing (Abrams et al., 2003) revealed that many teachers from across the United States feel pressure to improve student performance on test scores and narrow their curriculum to spend more time on tested items and teaching test-taking skills. The results also indicated that approximately 70% of the teachers in this study did not view their state-mandated testing program as beneficial for improving student learning.

Teachers are generally comfortable with state-designed achievement levels insofar as they are used for teachers, schools, and districts to make informed choices in such areas as resource allocation and the designing and implementation of curriculum. It is when achievement levels are used to sanction states, districts, and schools through annual statewide assessments that teachers draw objection, especially when teachers question the validity of the assessment (Hamilton et al., 2007; Taylor et al., 2003).

The literature supports a relationship between teacher stress and the NCLB Act. When a potentially threatening event is encountered, a reflexive, cognitive balancing act ensues, weighing the perceived demands of the event against one's perceived ability to deal with them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Events perceived as potential threats trigger the stress response, a series of physiological and psychological changes that occur when



coping capacities are seriously challenged. The most typical trigger to the stress response is the perception that one's coping resources are inadequate for handling life's demands.

Teacher stress may be seen as the perception of an imbalance between demands at school and the resources teachers have for coping with them (Esteve, 2000; Troman & Woods, 2001). Researchers (Farber, 1998; LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Troman & Woods, 2001) note that teachers who experience stress over long periods of time may experience what is known as burnout.

Critics argue that the pressure of testing causes teachers to dumb-down the curriculum, reduce critical-thinking activities, rely more heavily on drills and worksheets, and reduce the quality of education (Corbett & Wilson, 1991; Smith, 1991; Smith & Rottenburg, 1991). The Center on Education Policy (2006) and Bond (2004) of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching have indicated that the present high-stakes testing atmosphere in education forces teachers to teach to the test. AYP is used to identify those schools that need improvement. However, these school-label designations have come to have a very negative connotation for the schools. Teachers have reported that increased stress and reduced morale (Boaler, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Taylor et al., 2003) are related to demoralizing reporting systems (Taylor et al., 2003).

While years of teaching experience would seem to be an important variable in terms of teacher burnout, the research is sparse and inconsistent (Byrne, 1999). While some researchers (Borthwick et al., 1982) contend that teachers with fewer years of experience exhibit higher levels of burnout, Borg and Falzon (1989) concluded that teachers with 20+ years of experience exhibit higher levels of stress. In a more recent

study, Malik et al. (1991) found years of teaching experience not to be an important variable in terms of teacher burnout.

Class size has emerged as one of the most frequently mentioned environmental stressors in studies using self-report methods (Sandholtz, 1990). The Health and Education Research Operative Services (2003) indicated that learning increases as class size decreases. French (1993) surveyed 223 Colorado elementary teachers on teachers' perception of class size. The results indicated that teachers with larger class size reported greater stress than did teachers with lower pupil-teacher ratios. Class size plays a role in teachers' perceptions toward the NCLB mandates. A research study was done by James (2007) in which the findings indicated that teachers with a small class size of 17 or fewer students had a significantly higher opinion of the NCLB/AYP mandates than did teachers with large class sizes who were responsible for 23 or more students.

### **Methodology**

Teacher perception of the NCLB Act and how it contributes to teacher burnout in this study was examined by utilizing two instruments. First was the MBI-ES instrument which maintains that burnout consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Exhaustion results from physical or emotional demands, depersonalization entails negative attitudes towards students and the work environment, and reduced personal accomplishment is the burnout symptom where the workers evaluate themselves negatively.

Second, the No Child Left Behind survey (James, 2007) focused on four components of the NCLB that may contribute to burnout: Teachers' perception of standardized testing, pressure felt by teachers to improve test scores, standardized test

effect on instructional practices, and teachers' opinions of NCLB and its adequate yearly progress. Teachers' years of teaching experience and the class size as it relates to small, average, or large class sizes were also examined to determine how they influenced differences in reported levels of burnout.

This study used descriptive statistics to describe teachers' responses to the No Child Left Behind as it relates to adequate yearly progress goals, pressure to improve test scores, standardized testing, and the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices. Descriptive statistics was also implemented to examine reported levels of burnout among teachers.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) procedures were used to investigate how the dependent variable, burnout, as manifested by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, was affected by the independent variables, years of teaching and class size.

Canonical correlation was employed to determine how the dependent variable, burnout, as manifested by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, was influenced by the following set of independent variables: Teacher perceptions of standardized testing, pressure to improve test scores, standardized test effect on instructional practices, and teacher perception of Adequate Yearly Progress.

### **Population and Sample**

This study was conducted in the elementary and secondary public schools in the Berrien County, Michigan, school districts. A non-experimental quantitative research design was used to examine the extent to which variables in the three subscales of the MBI were influenced by teachers' attitude toward the No Child Left Behind Act. Data

were obtained by administering surveys containing structured questions. The teacher population for Berrien County was approximately 1,535. From this population, 236 highly qualified teachers from Grades 3–12 who were employed in six school districts within Berrien County, Michigan, represented the sample that participated in this study. Of the 230 teachers, 108 teachers completed the survey packets for an approximately 47% response rate.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **Research Question 1**

What are the teachers' attitudes toward No Child Left Behind as they relate to (a) standardized testing, (b) pressure to improve test scores, (c) the impact of standardized testing on instructional practices, and (d) adequate yearly progress?

The findings in this study indicated that:

1. Fifty percent or more of the teachers indicated that standardized testing was ineffective.
2. Fifty percent or more of the teachers felt pressure to improve standardized testing from the following sources: State Department of Education, No Child Left Behind Act, U.S. Department of Education, the newspaper media, and District Administration. The teachers indicated that they also put pressure on themselves to improve test scores.
3. Over 50% or more of the teachers agreed that the following survey items had an impact on how the state and district's standardized tests affected instructional practices: (a) encouraged teaching to the standards, (b) encouraged spending a lot of time teaching content on the state/district test, (c) encouraged elimination of curriculum material that is not tested, (d) encouraged spending a lot of time on test-taking skills, (e)

encouraged the use of rote drill in teaching, (f) encouraged emphasis on teaching factual recall knowledge, (g) encouraged the use of more explicit instruction, (h) assisted in clarifying which learning goals are the most important, and (i) encouraged more effective teaching of students who struggle academically.

4. Over 50% or more of teachers agreed that (a) teaching to the test, (b) elimination of non-tested curriculum and (c) teacher burnout were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress.

5. Over 50% or more of the teachers disagreed that the following survey items were impacted by the No Child Left Behind Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress: (a) encouraged teachers to improve their teaching effectiveness, (b) empowered teachers to make instructional decisions that will be best for the students, (c) was helpful in making sure all students receive high-quality education, (d) was helpful in reducing the achievement gap in education, and (e) it is an effective way to assess the quality of schools.

### Conclusions and Discussion

According to the NCLB mandates, standards must be aligned with state-developed achievement levels (Hamilton et al., 2007). Teachers' attitudes toward the validity of their annual statewide assessments vary from state to state. A study done by Sunderman et al. (2004) indicated that between 70% and 80% of teachers reported that their state curriculum and standards were aligned with standardized assessment. In another study done by Hamilton et al. (2007), fewer than 50% of the teachers in three states agreed that their states' reading-language arts, math, and science assessments were a good measure of students' mastery of those subjects. Teachers in this study felt that

their states' assessments were misaligned with their state standards and curriculum. The results from this study indicated that 50% or more of the teachers indicated that standardized tests were ineffective. This may be an indication that state standards and curriculum may be misaligned with state assessments.

A study was done by Teacher Network on 661 New York teachers (New York State United Teachers, 2007). The results of the study indicated that:

1. Seventy-nine percent of New York teachers stated that the emphasis on testing encouraged them to eliminate curriculum material that is not tested. Eighty percent stated that they spent a lot of time teaching test-taking skills.
2. Nearly 90% felt pressure from principals, administrators, school boards, and the news media to raise student test scores.
3. Ninety-five percent of the teachers agreed that the NCLB Act, with its Adequate Yearly Progress goals, encouraged teachers to 'teach to the test,' and 82% reported that they spend much of their time teaching students what they know will be on the test. Ninety percent stated that the NCLB Act with its Adequate Yearly Progress goals contributed to "teacher burnout."

The common threads arising from this study and the current research are as follows:

1. The majority of teachers felt pressure to increase student test scores from principals, administrators, school boards, and the news media.
2. The majority of teachers agreed that eliminating curriculum material that is not tested and spending a lot of time teaching test-taking skills had an impact on how the state and district's standardized tests affected their instructional practices.

3. The majority of teachers agreed that the NCLB Act with its Adequate Yearly Progress goals encouraged teachers to “teach to the test” and contributed to “teacher burnout.”

The results from this study indicated that the majority of teachers felt pressure from themselves as well as various other entities to improve standardized test scores. These entities included: (a) State Department of Education, (b) District Administration, (c) U.S. Department of Education, (d) the newspaper media, and (e) the No Child Left Behind Act.

The majority of the teachers felt that the use of state/district standardized testing pressured them to teach standards and content that are on the state/district test, to eliminate curriculum materials that are not tested, to spend a lot of time on test-taking skills, and on rote drill in teaching, to emphasize factual recall knowledge, and to use explicit instruction, clarify learning goals, and be more effective teachers to students who struggle academically.

The majority of the teachers reported that No Child Left Behind and its Adequate Yearly Progress goals contributed to teaching to the test, teacher burnout, and elimination of non-tested curriculum. Since AYP is measured by state standardized tests, a school faces serious sanctions should the school fail to meet adequate yearly progress for several years. Teachers may feel the pressure to maintain a positive reporting system. Teachers have reported increased stress and reduced morale related to demoralizing reporting systems (Boaler, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Taylor et al., 2003).

Teachers need to feel supported to alleviate the stress that may accompany high-stakes testing. Byrne (1994) found that a cause of teacher burnout was an administration

that denigrated teachers and failed to alleviate teacher workload. Friedman (2003) stated that professionals feel less burdened if they can rely on the organization for professional support.

Research studies have confirmed that the amount of time devoted to test preparation in the classroom increased as a result of the pressure from the sanctions of high-stakes tests (Herman & Golan, 1990; Hoffman et al., 2001). Because of the pressure to increase test scores, teachers spent more time on teaching standards and content on the district/state test and eliminating non-tested curriculum material. According to Bond (2004) of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, many people feel that the present high-stakes atmosphere in education “distorts instruction and forces teachers to teach to the test” (p. 1). The survey conducted by the National Board on Educational Testing indicated that many teachers from across the United States feel pressure to improve student performance on test scores and then narrow their curriculum to spend more time on tested items and teaching test-taking skills (Abrams et al., 2003).

Abrams et al. (2003) and Sunderman et al. (2004) found that factors such as annual high-stakes testing, AYP goals and the accompanying possibilities of sanctions, and increased pressure from states, districts, and school administration to ignore sound teaching practices in favor of test preparation are increasing teacher stress levels. These researchers cited a decrease in morale as the trend among teachers. Hamilton et al. (2007) indicated that three-quarters of teachers and administrators agreed that morale among school personnel has changed for the worse since 2001.

In conclusion, based on the data from this research and previous research studies, it is apparent that the implementation of elements from the No Child Left Behind Act has



been more of a burden than an asset to educators. Teachers feel that the pressure to improve standardized scores and meet adequately yearly progress goals compromises their instructional practices in a negative manner. Identifying schools that need improvement have increased stress and reduced morale among teachers. Teachers have reported that increased stress and reduced morale (Boaler, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Taylor et al., 2003) are related to demoralizing reporting systems (Taylor et al., 2003). It appears that instead of enhancing the educational field, the passage of the NCLB and its demands could halt the development of truly significant improvement in teaching and learning.

### Research Question 2

Research Question 2: What are the perceived levels of burnout among teachers?

The findings in this study indicated the following:

1. Forty-seven percent of the teachers reflected a high degree of emotional exhaustion.
2. Eighteen percent of the teachers reflected a high degree of Depersonalization.
3. Sixty-five percent of the teachers reflected a low degree of Personal Accomplishment.
4. Based on the MBI, 3.7% of the teachers surveyed reflected levels of burnout.

### Conclusions and Discussion

Several studies have indicated that emotional exhaustion had negative effects on job performance and that emotional exhaustion was a prominent reaction to job-related stress (Friedman, 1995; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Friedman (1995) indicated that as a result of emotional exhaustion, people began to experience an enormous sense of

depersonalization regarding their work and the people with whom they work. The following may be contributing factors to the teachers' high levels of emotional exhaustion:

1. Teachers who are in schools that have met AYP feel the stress of trying to meet the demands to maintain AYP.

2. Teachers who are in schools that have not met AYP feel the strain of job insecurity as their school is labeled as "needing improvement" or facing corrective actions.

3. Teachers feel the pressure of colleagues, administrators, parents, and outside agencies to improve standardized test scores.

The 47% of teachers who are experiencing a high degree of emotional exhaustion need emotional support and resources to reduce their stress levels. This unmet need can lead to increased levels of depersonalization. Teachers may be at greater risk for depersonalization because their daily work life often includes large doses of isolation from their professional peers. While teachers do interact with others on a regular basis throughout the workday, the majority of such interactions are with students, and not with other teachers or professional staff members who might better understand the demands teachers face. Factors such as the physical layout of most campuses, with teachers working alone in their classrooms, and scheduling constraints that make finding time to meet with peers virtually impossible, can cause teachers to feel disconnected (Bennett & LeCompte, 1990).

This depersonalization may act as a protective mechanism, as evidenced by the descriptions of "worn-out" teachers, whose cynical views towards students and teaching

allowed them to continue to remain in the field, even in a diminished capacity (Farber, 1998). While depersonalization may act as some protection for teachers, it also may encourage isolation, strengthening the risk for burnout.

The results of this study indicated that only 18% of teachers experienced high levels of depersonalization. This may be an indication that the majority of teachers in this study may be in a work environment that fosters feelings of emotional security towards oneself as well as genuine feelings and concerns for students and their academic success. The majority of the teachers may not feel disconnected from their colleagues but have a positive attitude towards their colleagues and the work environment.

Over half of the respondents (65%) reflected a low degree of personal accomplishment. This is an indicator that the majority of the teachers may feel they are no longer being effective in working with students and in fulfilling other school-related responsibilities. Teachers report that job satisfaction is gained from the nature of day-to-day classroom activities, such as working with children, seeing students make progress, working with supportive colleagues, and overall school climate (Cockburn & Haydn, 2004). With the demands of the NCLB it is difficult for teachers to meet the needs of every child. This may lead to negative opinions of their levels of competency and efficacy. Unfulfilled expectations for self-fulfillment, demands from the administrator, teaching to the test, striving to increase test scores, and meeting adequate yearly progress may be contributing factors to low levels of personal accomplishments.

Based on the criteria for the MBI, only 3.7% of the respondents in this study reflected levels of burnout. The majority of the respondents were in schools that had met AYP within the last 3 years. The security of their schools meeting AYP and not facing

corrective and restructuring actions could account for the low percentage of respondents who reflected levels of burnout. Teachers who reflected levels of burnout had high scores in the areas of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and a low score in personal accomplishment. However, almost half of the respondents (47%) reflected a high degree of emotional exhaustion, which is considered a key component of the burnout syndrome by some (Maslach et al., 1996).

### Research Question 3

Research Question 3: To what extent are measures of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) related to teachers' attitudes toward NCLB (adequate yearly progress, pressure to improve test scores, standardized testing, and standardized test effect on instructional practices)?

The findings in this study indicated the following:

1. There is a moderate positive relationship between adequate yearly progress and the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices.
2. There is a low positive relationship between opinion of standardized tests and adequate yearly progress.
3. There is a low negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices.
4. There is a low negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and opinion of standardized tests.
5. Teachers who score low in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high in personal accomplishment will feel less pressure to increase test scores and have high opinions regarding standardized test and its effect on instructional practices as well

as high opinions of the impact of the NCLB on adequate yearly progress.

### Conclusions and Discussion

The majority of teachers surveyed in this study agreed that the NCLB and its AYP goals contributed to teacher burnout, and the literature indicated that high-stakes testing contributed to burnout (Hanson, 2006). The findings in this study revealed low negative relationships between the NCLB variables and the burnout variables.

The effects that high-stakes testing has on teaching practices have been mixed. Responding to questions about the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act, a large majority of districts (71%) reported that NCLB's testing requirements have led them to increase curricular time spent on reading and math for students at risk of failing, and decrease time for other subjects. However, districts were divided about whether this was a negative or positive effect (Center on Education Policy, 2006).

AYP is used to determine if schools are successfully educating their children. Schools that fail to meet adequate yearly progress become improvement schools that face corrective and/or restructuring actions. The severity of consequences attached to state tests affects the instruction students received; as the stakes increase, the influence of the test increases (Pedulla et al., 2003). The delivery of instruction must meet the needs of all students since the goal of the NCLB mandate is to have all students reaching proficient levels in reading and math by 2014 as measured by performance on the state test. The results within this study indicated that there was a moderate positive relationship between AYP and standardized test and its effect on instructional practices, which may indicate that as schools meet adequate yearly progress, teachers respond more positively to the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices.

Based on the survey by Rose and Gallup (2004), the majority of those surveyed believe that testing only in English and mathematics will not yield a fair picture of a school. The majority surveyed also stated that it is not possible to judge a student's proficiency in English and Mathematics on the basis of a single test.

The majority of teachers in this study indicated that standardized testing was ineffective. The results in this study also indicated that there is a small positive relationship between opinion about standardized testing and adequate yearly progress. Teachers' attitude toward standardized tests is generally positive when it is used for teachers, schools, and districts to make informed choices in such areas as resource allocation and the designing and implementation of curriculum. It is when achievement levels are used to sanction states, districts, and schools through annual statewide assessments that teachers draw objection, especially when teachers question the validity of the assessment (Hamilton et al., 2007; Taylor et al., 2003). The validity of statewide assessments should be aligned with state standards and curriculum (Hamilton et al., 2007).

If state standards and curriculum are aligned with statewide assessments, teachers may respond more positively to state standardized testing. This alignment of standards and curriculum with statewide assessment may increase the likelihood of schools meeting AYP. The results of this research indicate that as schools meet adequate yearly progress, teacher opinions of standardized testing become more positive.

Several studies indicate that there is a relationship between teacher stress and issues exacerbated by the NCLB Act. Critics argue that the pressure of testing causes teachers to dumb-down the curriculum, reduce critical-thinking activities, rely more

heavily on drills and worksheets, and reduce the quality of education (Corbett & Wilson, 1991; Smith, 1991; Smith & Rottenburg, 1991). Teachers in high-stakes situations reported feeling more pressure to have their students do well on the test and to align their instruction with the test and to engage in more test preparation (Pedulla et al., 2003).

The majority of teachers in this study reported that the impact of the NCLB Act and its Adequate Yearly Progress has contributed to the elimination of non-tested curriculum as well as to teacher burnout. The results in this study showed a small negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices. This could suggest that teachers who reported high levels of emotional exhaustion had low opinions regarding standardized tests as to the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices.

More and more teachers are reporting that they feel pressured to improve test scores (Koretz et al., 1996). A survey conducted by the National Board on Educational Testing (Abrams et al., 2003) revealed that many teachers from across the United States feel pressure to improve student performance on test scores and narrow their curriculum to spend more time on tested items and teaching test-taking skills. From the investigation of the cheating scandal in Atlanta (Copeland, 2013), the teachers stated that they were under pressure to meet state targets and to teach to the test.

Teachers in this study have indicated that they felt pressured from various entities, including the State Department of Education, the No Child Left Behind Act, the U.S. Department of Education, the newspaper media, and District Administration to improve students' test scores. The teachers indicated that they also put pressure on themselves to improve test scores. The results in this study showed a small negative relationship

between emotional exhaustion and opinions of state standardized testing. This could suggest that teachers who reported high levels of emotional exhaustion had low opinions regarding standardized tests.

The findings in this study indicated that teachers who score low in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and high in personal accomplishment will feel less pressure to increase test scores and have high opinions on the effect of standardized tests on instructional practices as well as high opinions of the impact of the NCLB and its Adequate Yearly Progress. The results of this study indicate that teachers who have not met the criteria for the burnout syndrome have a higher opinion of the NCLB Act and its mandates.

The following factors may have contributed to the findings in this study: Teachers who feel less pressured to increase test scores, who have high opinions of the NCLB and its AYP are probably in schools that are consistently meeting adequate yearly progress. Teachers who are employed in educational institutions that are meeting AYP may be in stress-reduced environments. They may not feel the pressure by administrators or other educational leaders to improve test scores or teach to the test. These teachers may be in an environment where there is a structure in place to support and assist teachers in meeting the needs of all students. In addition, teachers' class sizes may be small to average, which allows for more one-on-one interaction between teacher and student. This teacher/student collaboration may provide the opportunity for meeting the needs of all learners.



#### Research Question 4

Research Question 4: To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to years of teaching experience?

A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to examine the relationship between years of teaching experience and its effect on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The findings indicated that the components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment) were not affected by years of teaching experience.

#### Conclusions and Discussion

The findings in studies indicating the relationship between years of teaching and stress are inconsistent. Byrne (1999) stated that while years of teaching experience would seem to be an important variable in terms of teacher burnout, the research is sparse and inconsistent. While some researchers (Borthwick et al., 1982) indicated that teachers with fewer years of experience exhibit higher levels of burnout, Borg and Falzon (1989) concluded that teachers with 20+ years exhibit higher levels of stress.

The results of this study indicated that there is no relationship between years of teaching experience and the components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). However, research studies (Borg & Falzon, 1989; Borthwick et al., 1982) have confirmed that there is a significant relationship between years of teaching and stress/burnout. The relationship between burnout and years of teaching may have yielded insignificant results as a result of the following factor: A small population sample. The teacher population for the Berrien County is approximately 1,535. From this population, 236 highly qualified teachers

represented the sample that participated in this study. Of the 236 teachers, 108 teachers completed the survey packets. A larger scale study would generate statistically significant results.

Almost half of the respondents in this study experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion. This may be an indication that years of teaching may be an important variable in the stress/burnout process. However, teachers in this study with more or less teaching experience may be experiencing some levels of emotional exhaustion that may lead to burnout but do not meet all of the criteria for the burnout syndrome.

#### Research Question 5

Research Question 5: To what extent are reported levels of burnout related to class size?

A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to examine the relationship between teacher class size and its effect on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The findings indicated that emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment were not affected by class size. However, the analysis indicated that depersonalization was affected by teachers who had small classes and teachers who had large class sizes.

#### Conclusions and Discussion

Pate-Bain, Achilles, Boyd-Zaharas, and McKenna (1992), in their report on the Tennessee STAR class size study, concluded:

We view education not as a mass-production effort, but as a personal and individual experience. The model is not the factory. The focus is on serving clients. Class-size research is not an attempt to reduce class size, at its best it is an effort to find appropriate casework loads, because much of sound educational

practice consists of individual instruction, coaching, mentoring, and tutoring. (p. 256)

The focal point of this research was to examine the number of students in small, average, and large class sizes to determine the appropriate casework load that will enhance the instructional practices, increase the morale, and decrease the stress of educators. Therefore, it was important to determine if the number of students in a small, average, and large class contributed to teacher burnout. Based on the findings in this study, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment were not affected by class size. However, the analysis in this study indicated that depersonalization was affected by teachers who had small classes and teachers who had large class sizes.

Large class sizes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, marking, planning, and assessments. The time to develop relationships and provide individualized instruction may be diminished for teachers who spend more time in establishing classroom control and discipline (Blatchford et al., 2007). Teachers in large classes tend to spend more time on “nonacademic management” of students (Finn et al., 2003). This type of work environment may contribute to teachers having negative and inappropriate attitudes toward themselves, students, and the work environment. As a result, teachers who service students in large classes may experience higher levels of depersonalization.

The smaller the class size, the greater the likelihood that teachers will spend more time with individual students, identify specific needs, and set individual targets for students. In smaller classes there also tends to be more teaching overall and less student behavior problems. Teachers in smaller class settings also experience better relationships with, and have more knowledge of, individual pupils (Finn et al., 2003). This type of

work environment may foster feelings of emotional security towards oneself, genuine concern for students and their academic success, and a positive attitude towards colleagues and the work environment. As a result, teachers who service students in smaller classes may experience lower levels of depersonalization.

In the field of education, the number of students in the classroom has become an increasing concern for educators. Legislative mandates on maximum class size have been very popular at the state level. As an education reform, the broad goal of class-size reduction (CSR) has been introduced to increase the number of individualized student-teacher interactions intended to improve student learning. A research study done by James (2007) indicated that teachers with a small class size of 17 or fewer students had a significantly higher opinion of the NCLB/AYP mandates than did teachers with large class sizes who were responsible for 23 or more students.

Based on this research and previous studies, it is apparent that class size plays a role in teacher burnout. Previous studies have indicated that teachers who taught in large classes experience greater stress than do teachers with lower pupil-teacher ratios (French, 1993) and that learning increases as class size decreases (The Health and Education Research Operative Services, 2003).

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The following recommendations will go a long way to minimize prolonged stress which often leads to burnout:

1. Teachers need to feel supported and respected as professionals. Principals need to support teachers more by being present in teachers' classrooms, listening and being sensitive to their concerns and needs, and providing them with performance

feedback that may act as a buffer against stress.

2. Teachers need to be involved in policy-making decisions for the vision of their school and the district.

3. Teachers need to be provided with a stress-reduced environment that will provide them with opportunities to collaborate and establish goals and work as a collaborative group.

4. Principals, superintendents, curriculum coordinator, and other educational leaders should consult with teachers on curriculum development, class scheduling, individual planning, and other educational matters which directly impact their classroom.

5. Principals, superintendents, curriculum coordinators, and other educational leaders should provide professional learning communities among teachers for collaboration and support in shared responsibility for student achievement. Bring teachers together to work on examining student data, setting specific learning goals, and improvement of instruction for student achievement.

6. Principals, superintendents, curriculum coordinators, and other educational leaders should encourage professional development activities such as mentoring and networking, which may enhance a sense of accomplishment and a more fully developed professional identity for teachers.

7. Principals, superintendents, curriculum coordinators, and other educational leaders should encourage teachers to implement differentiation of instruction to incorporate the common core state standards without feeling the pressure of teaching to the test. Train teachers to utilize differentiated instruction by implementing components such as: Small-group instruction, cooperative groups, choice opportunities, independent

contracts, and a variety of teaching styles and modes of instruction delivery. This will aid the teacher in integrating the curriculum materials that are not tested with the curriculum material that is tested so that the pressure to spend a lot of time on test-taking skills is reduced.

8. Every opportunity should be made available for teachers to get mental health services to manage stress/burnout. This intervention will decrease the risk of teacher burnout becoming a full-blown breakdown, causing emotional and physical damage.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The following recommendations for further study are proposed based on the findings and conclusions of this research:

1. Additional research is needed to evaluate the level of burnout in teachers and how it affects student productivity.
2. Future research should continue to explore the relationships among those variables that negatively impact teacher instructional delivery and student performance.

## APPENDIX A

### INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

## INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Dear Teacher:

I am a counselor with the Benton Harbor Area Schools and also an Andrews University student pursuing a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. I am conducting a research study to investigate the relationship between teacher burnout and teacher attitudes toward the No Child Left Behind Act.

My research assistant will distribute and collect all survey packets. The survey packet contains this informed consent agreement, a 22-question survey item, and a 17-item survey for teachers on No Child Left Behind. On the surveys is a number that is the same as the attached ticket. Before turning in the completed surveys detach the ticket and keep it for the school drawing. Please be aware that some of the questions on the 17 item survey do have subcomponents. The entire survey process should take no longer than 20 minutes. Please respond honestly. This survey is completely anonymous. When the surveys are completed, my research assistant will collect them within a week after they are delivered.

Andrews University's Institutional Review Board has approved this research, and this research has no foreseeable risks. Although you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help researchers better understand teacher attitudes and may help administrators and superintendents better support their teachers.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous. Neither your name nor a code will be on the survey packet. You may choose not to participate or may withdraw at any time. However, participants completing the survey will be eligible to participate in a school drawing to win a \$25.00 gift card from Walmart. Once you have completed your surveys, place the surveys in a sealed envelope. Please remember to detach and keep the coupon. Return the sealed envelope to the main office or to the person acting as my research assistant.

The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. Results may also be used for educational purposes and for professional presentations. However, no individual participant, school, or district will be identified.

Please contact me at [snazyg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:snazyg@sbcglobal.net) if you have any questions about my research study. You may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Rick Kosinski, at [kosinskf@andrews.edu](mailto:kosinskf@andrews.edu) if you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant.

Returning the survey packet is considered your consent to participate. You may keep this form after you return the completed survey packet. If you do not wish to participate, please return the uncompleted surveys in a sealed envelope. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Carmen George  
Researcher



## APPENDIX B

### A SURVEY FOR TEACHERS ON NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB)

## A Survey for Teachers on No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

*Directions: In this survey the terms “test” and “standardized test” refer to the standardized tests given in Michigan. Please respond as honestly as possible to the following items. Your individual responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.*

On the following continuum, circle the number that best indicates your opinion of standardized tests that are being used in your district/school?

1)	Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	effective
2)	Necessary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unnecessary
3)	Useless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	useful
4)	Valid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	invalid
5)	important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unimportant
6)	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	appropriate
7)	inaccurate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	accurate
8)	informative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	uninformative
9)	beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	harmful
10)	worthless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	worthwhile

Check a box to indicate the extent you feel pressure from the following individuals or groups to improve students' test scores.

	Almost No Pressure	Some Pressure	Moderate Pressure	Quite a Bit of Pressure	A Great Deal of Pressure
11) My Principal					
12) Other Teachers					
13) Administration					
14) Local School Board					
15) Parents					
16) Students					
17) Myself					
18) Newspaper/Media					
19) State Dept. of Education					
20) U.S. Dept. of Education					

21) No Child Left Behind  
Act

The following items inquire about how your state and district's standardized tests affect your instructional practices. Please read each item and check a box to indicate your degree of agreement: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, or SA = Strongly Agree.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
22) State/district testing encourages me to use more rote drill in my teaching.					
23) State/district testing encourages me to eliminate curriculum material that is not tested.					
24) State/district testing encourages me to use more student inquiry in my teaching.					
25) State/district testing has encouraged me to more effectively meet the needs of differentiated learners.					
26) State/district testing has changed my instructional practice for the better.					
27) State/district helps me to clarify which learning goals are the most important.					
28) The state/district encourages me to emphasize the teaching of factual knowledge.					
29) The state/district encourages me to emphasize deep-level understanding in my teaching.					
30) State/district encourages me to more effectively teach students who perform at a high level academically.					
31) State/district testing encourages me to use more explicit instruction.					
32) State/district testing encourages me to collaborate with other teachers.					
33) To prepare for the state/district testing, I spend a lot of time teaching my students test-taking skills.					
34) The state/district encourages me to teach in more student-centered ways.					
35) State/district testing encourages me to more effectively teach students who struggle academically.					
36) The state/district testing encourages me to teach more critical thinking skills.					
37) State/district encourages me to teach to the standards.					

38) I spend a lot of time teaching my students content that I know will be on the state/district test.					
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The following items inquire about your opinion/perception of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* and its *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* goals. As above, check a box to indicate your level of agreement.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
39) NCLB with its AYP goals has encouraged teachers to improve their teaching effectiveness with <i>all</i> students.					
40) Publicly publishing test scores and/or schools' progress toward the AYP goals encourages teachers to improve their teaching effectiveness.					
41) NCLB with its AYP goals has encouraged the elimination of non-tested curriculum.					
42) NCLB with its AYP goals is helping to reduce the achievement gap in education.					
43) NCLB with its AYP goals encourages teachers "to teach to the test."					
44) NCLB with its AYP goals has contributed to "teacher burnout."					
45) NCLB with its AYP goals is helpful in making sure all students receive a high quality education.					
46) NCLB with its AYP goals empowers teachers to make instructional decisions that will be best for their students.					
47) NCLB with its AYP goals encourages teachers to use "best practices" when teaching their students.					
48) NCLB with its AYP goals is an effective way to assess the quality of schools.					

**Please tell me a little about yourself:**

I am a:

\_\_\_\_\_ Male  
\_\_\_\_\_ Female

I consider myself to be:

\_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian                      \_\_\_\_\_ Native American                      \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic/Latino  
\_\_\_\_\_ African American                      \_\_\_\_\_ Asian                      \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

I have been teaching a total of \_\_\_\_\_ years.

Present teaching assignment (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 9<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 10<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 11<sup>th</sup> Grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

There are \_\_\_\_\_ students in my class

The school in which I teach is a (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ Public School in a community with *less than 1,000 citizens*  
\_\_\_\_\_ Public School in a community *between 1,000 and 5,000 citizens*  
\_\_\_\_\_ Public School in a community *between 5,000 and 15,000 citizens*  
\_\_\_\_\_ Public School in a community *over 15,000 citizens*

The name of the school where I teach is:

\_\_\_\_\_

The name of the city or town where I teach is:

\_\_\_\_\_

According to the No Child Left Behind Mandates, the school in which I teach:

\_\_\_\_\_ *Has been identified as a school in need of improvement* in any academic area  
and/or with any disaggregated population of students.  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Has not been identified as a school in need of improvement* in any  
academic area and/or with any disaggregated population of students.

Used by permission.

## APPENDIX C

### MBI EDUCATORS SURVEY

## MBI-Educators Survey

Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson & Richard L. Schwab

*The purpose of this survey is to discover how educators view their job  
and the people with whom they work closely.*

**Instructions:** On the following pages are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about *your* job. If you have *never* had this feeling, write the number "0" (zero) in the space before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate *how often* you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way. An example is shown below.

How often:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week a week	A few times	Every day

**Example:**

**How Often**

0-6

**Statement:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel depressed at work.

If you never feel depressed at work, you would write the number "0" (zero) under the heading "How Often." If you rarely feel depressed at work (a few times a year or less), you would write the number "1." If your feelings of depression are fairly frequent (a few times a week but not daily), you would write the number "5."

## MBI-Educators Survey

How often:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

---

### How Often 0-6 Statements

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I can easily understand how my students feel about things.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel burned out from my work.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel very energetic.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel frustrated by my job.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel I'm working too hard on my job.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ I don't really care what happens to some students.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ I feel students blame me for some of their problems.

---

(Administrative use only)

EE: \_\_\_\_\_ cat: \_\_\_\_\_ DP: \_\_\_\_\_ cat \_\_\_\_\_ PA: \_\_\_\_\_ cat \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX D

### PERMISSION LETTER

## *UW Lab School*

*1000 E. University Ave., Dept 3374  
Laramie, WY 82071 307-721-2155*

January 22, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Joan Kay James, give Carmen George permission to use the survey I developed concerning teachers' perceptions of the influences of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and high-stakes standardized testing on curriculum and instruction. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Joan Kay James*

Joan Kay James  
jjames@acsd1.org  
(307) 721-2155 Ext. 3009  
PO Box 130  
Laramie, WY 82073

## REFERENCE LIST

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## VITA

## **CARMEN M. GEORGE**

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### **- OBJECTIVE -**

Counseling Psychologist

### **- SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND -**

I have gained combined professional experience, including serving as a teacher, literacy coach, and guidance counselor.

### **- EDUCATION -**

1982    Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) with concentration in Reading Education,  
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI

1981    Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S), Andrews University, Berrien  
Springs, MI

### **- PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE -**

2009-2014    School Counselor    Benton Harbor Area Schools, Benton Harbor, MI

2005-2009    Literacy Coach            Benton Harbor Area Schools, Benton, Harbor, MI

1992-1999    Elementary Teacher    Chicago Academy, Chicago, IL

### **- PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS -**

- Member, American School Counselor Association
- Member, American Psychological Associations
- Member, Michigan Education Association
- Member, Pi Lambda Theta

### **- CERTIFICATION -**

- State of Michigan Guidance Counselor Certification
- State of Michigan Teacher Certification
- State of Illinois Teachers Certification